

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**An Analysis of Grammatical and Associated Errors Found in the Writing of Third
Grade Saudi Male Students in Four High Schools In the City of Riyadh**

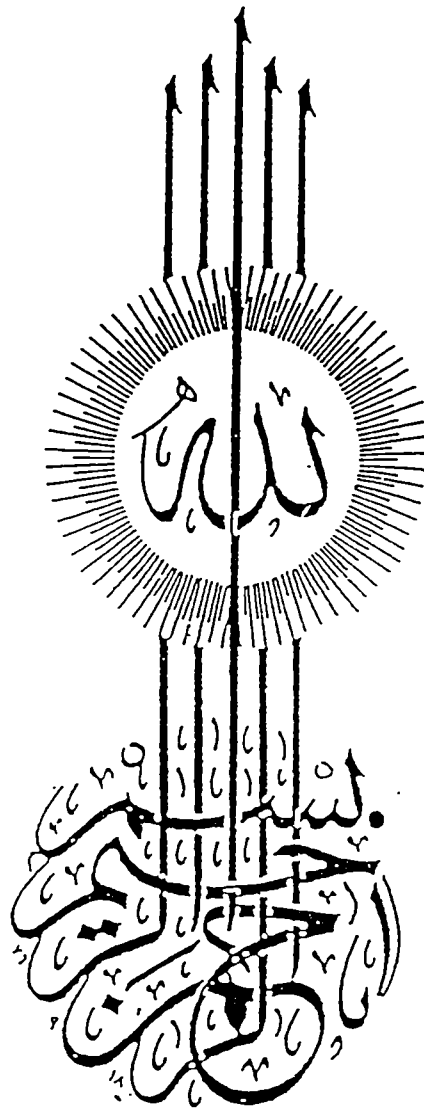
Being a Thesis submitted For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of Hull

by

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IN THE NAME OF GOD, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL

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Abstract

The main aim of the thesis is to identify and analyse the types and frequency of grammatical, lexical and general linguistic errors made in the Arabic composition writings of the third year high school students in the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This study is to provide information that can be utilised in the improvement of teaching of the grammatical rules of the Arabic language to public school students. The approach is descriptive, analytical and classificatory.

Chapter One deals with the research problem, aims and significance of the study, and also discusses the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two reviews the background to Arabic grammar in the Saudi educational system in the country, particularly in the secondary school system.

Chapter Three is an extensive literature review on the background of grammatical errors and Arabic grammatical rules.

Chapter Four examines the prevalence of grammatical errors, their causes and complaints.

Chapter Five reviews the efforts and attempts to simplify Arabic grammatical rules as a reaction to the dilemma of Arabic grammar and the prevalence of the grammatical errors.

Chapter Six deals with the research design and methodology of the study undertaken.

Chapter Seven presents and analysis the main results of this study. It starts with frequency of the grammatical errors and the percentage of the students who committed grammatical errors. This chapter also presents the frequency of types of errors for each grammatical component and finally it highlights the general linguistic errors found in the students' writings.

Chapter Eight, which is the final chapter, is devoted to a conclusion and implications for practice and future research.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Preface

Nation states have always paid special attention to the question of language. One of the reasons for this special interest is the important role that language plays in relation to individuals and society. Language is the tool with which speakers communicate their feelings, emotions, desires and needs. Language is also the means by which different cultures communicate with each other. A language is a store of the cultural wealth of a nation; the medium by which this wealth is handed down from one generation to the next. The development of civilisation, the advancement of technology and of human thought generally, have only been possible because of the medium of language. Language can therefore be seen as the basis for human knowledge generally and as the medium for the understanding of life and religion in particular.

The importance of language for nations has resulted in some developing countries endeavouring to extend the usage of their languages to other nations, employing various methods to do this. This is because the life of a language depends upon the life of the nation from which it issues and a language's decline is correspondingly linked to the decline of a nation's vitality. One can see this as one of the reasons that occupying powers often attempt to change the linguistic practices of the states which they occupy. The strength of a language is representative of the

strength of its nation and the weakness of a language being representative of a nation's weakness.

The Arabic language is particularly distinctive over and above the reasons mentioned because of its importance for the nations of the Arab world. This is due to the fact that it is the language of the Holy Book (The Koran). There is, therefore, a strong connection between the Arabic language and Islam. In addition, the Arabic language has a long history which includes a wealth of artistic and intellectual developments, and it represents a link between an older civilisation and its experiences on the one hand and modern society on the other.

Like any living language, the Arabic language is the means of transmission of knowledge to young people. This is principally because of the role it plays in teaching and learning in the primary, secondary and higher education sectors. The Arabic language is especially important at the secondary school stage because it represents the most important means by which the students communicate. It is also the medium through which they strengthen and develop their skills in reading, writing and aural comprehension.

The study of the Arabic language at this stage is divided into grammar, poetry and *balāgha* (rhetoric). The intention behind this division is to organise school work so as to give sufficient time for development in each of these areas. In this way, at the end of the academic year, students will have achieved the desired linguistic proficiency in reading, writing and aural comprehension.

Modern practices in language teaching aim at teaching a set of skills (these being: aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing skills) because language as a means of communication is made up of these four skills. Arabic grammar does not come under any one of these headings, but rather governs them all, as it is the set of principles which regulates and controls each of these skills (Younis, Fathi and Al-Naqah, 1977 :13).

The importance of grammar in the learning process is due to the fact that it constitutes the regulative principles that control and direct the processes of speaking and writing. It is only possible for the learner to master comprehension and writing after mastering the rules of grammar. Without them, any expressed thought or idea will be indeterminate and apparently without point and the meaning of the statement may be misunderstood.

The modern trend is to teach Arabic as a corpus of abilities: the ability to speak, to read and to write. Grammar itself is not one of these abilities but each one is subject to the rules of grammar which are the laws which control and maintain these abilities.

Arabic is a highly inflected language and this makes an understanding of grammar especially important as an error in *'icrāb* can sometimes change the whole meaning of a phrase.

Educational organisations in Saudi Arabia such as the Ministries of Education, Higher Education and Girls' education, various colleges and other bodies, have all placed special emphasis on the teaching of grammar and have

allocated it a higher percentage of time on the curriculum than other subjects. The percentage of time varies from one stage to next, a point I will address in detail in the next chapter. Special colleges and departments have been established to supply teachers for schools and editors for publishing companies.

1.2 The problem

1.2.1 Background

Despite the attention given to grammar throughout the various levels of education in Saudi Arabia, there are still vocal complaints regarding the widespread grammatical mistakes committed by students when reading out loud and in comprehension, both oral and written.

The first to warn against the problems of teaching Arabic in schools was Taha Husain over 60 years ago, when he stated that “our Arabic language is not taught in our schools, but something strange is being presented which bears no resemblance to real life and has no relation whatsoever to the student’s mental and emotional concern”. (Husain, T, 1933 :7)

In her famous book, Our Language and Life, Aishah Abdulrahman mentions that :

a threatening feature which illustrates the crisis being suffered by the language, is the fact that whenever the student progresses in learning the Arabic language, he or she actually increases in ignorance of Arabic, as well as coming to detest the language more than before. A student may progress further and even graduate from University, but writing a simple letter in his or her native language may be an unattainable task. In fact a student may specialise in studying the Arabic language and achieve the highest academic degrees whilst being unable to grasp this language which is his or her mother tongue and the field of his or her study (Abdulrahman, A, 1969:196).

The poor achievement of students in grammar throughout various academic levels has become common and well known, and this poor standard remains a handicap throughout the years of higher education, and even until graduation. However, it is only when these students acquire positions where they are sometimes required to deliver improvised and unprepared speeches, that these poor standards become apparent with an error occurring possibly every few words. This has led many to resort to using colloquial Arabic in order to avoid using classical Arabic and making mistakes. (This problem is discussed further in Chapter Five).

Students often graduate from University being totally or partially illiterate, which is a great loss, despite the huge amounts of money spent by the Saudi government in the field of education. This outcome is the result of the large number of requirements in the curriculum, which oblige the student to absorb both important and unimportant information in an unorganised and unfocused manner. (Gazzaz, H, 1980:9). Al-Awad (1995) mentioned in his official response that this deficiency in grammar and the prevalence of grammatical errors among students at the various educational stages are not reflected in their exam results. The pass rate of the third grade high school students in 1993 in the subject of Arabic grammar reached 90% for the Arts Section and 97% for the Science section. (Al-Awad, 1995). Students are led to believe that grammar is only grammatical rules, and that grammar is a subject which is studied as an end in itself and has no relation to verbal and written composition.

Recognising the danger of students' deficiency in grammar at various school and university levels, the University of Imam Mohammed Bin Saud held two seminars, the first in Riyadh in 1985 under the title of "The development of Arabic curriculum in pre-university education", the second, also held in Riyadh, in October 1995, under the title of "The phenomenon of language deficiency at the University level".

I have experienced students' deficiency in grammar and the prevalence of errors in many contexts. First, after graduating from university and being appointed as a teaching assistant at the Department of Education in the Faculty of Social Sciences, I was given the job of supervising a group of students who were being trained to teach various subjects at public schools, both preparatory and secondary. While I accompanied these teacher trainees on their trips to school, I noticed the grammatical errors made by students they were teaching and the students' inability to understand grammatical rules. Therefore, I exploited the opportunity of being there and looked at the writings of the students at high school. I also listened to students' discussions with their teachers, and their answers to various questions. Even in the grammar classes, students made grammatical errors which caught my attention.

Secondly, when supervising a group of teacher trainees who were in the final year at the Department of Arabic, I noticed that, during teaching at secondary schools, those teachers themselves committed grave grammatical errors. Moreover, when secondary school students read texts to put into practice what they had learnt, I noticed that some students made grammatical errors and the teacher trainee was

not aware of them nor was he able to draw the students' attention to such errors. This was despite the fact that these teachers have studied almost all grammatical components during their education at the three stages - elementary, intermediate and high school - and specialised in Arabic grammar during their undergraduate studies (four years at the University level). However, judging by the way they taught grammar one could surmise that they had not specialised in this vitally important subject. The danger here is that teaching of Arabic grammar is assigned to a person who does not have the necessary qualities for doing such a job, only a certificate which says that the person concerned is a graduate of Arabic. In fact, such teachers do not differ much from any other teachers who specialise in other subjects.

The deteriorating standard of students of Arabic grammar, with frequent errors in writing, reading and speaking, not only keeps the teaching of grammar in public schools, and especially high schools, at its currently low level, it also bodes ill for the future. Students' hatred of Arabic will increase because of grammar and their growing dislike of grammar teachers will make teaching grammar a pointless exercise where a great deal of time, effort and money are expended without any benefit. Students will resort to using colloquial Arabic, rather than standard Arabic and this might lead, if only in the distant future, to turning existing dialects into weak languages replacing the deep-rooted standard Arabic. This possibility spurred me to carry out a study on the common grammatical mistakes made by third year male students at high schools in Riyadh city in Saudi Arabia.

As far as I know, this is an area where no previous empirical research appears to have been done. I checked with all departments of Arabic and Education in the

seven universities of Saudi Arabia, as well as checking all MA and Ph.D. dissertations written in the U.K. and the USA, but did not find a single study in this area, especially at the high school level of education.

1.2.2 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyse the types and frequencies of grammatical errors made in the writings of third year male students at high schools in the city of Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as Ahmad (1979) points out that:

Carrying out research projects and field studies including analysing common grammatical errors made by students in different classes in every educational level and making use of the results of such studies when designing curricula for each level and every class so that we take curricula away from the traditional way of discussing grammatical problems, is an essential factor in manipulating problems associated with teaching of Arabic grammar (Ahmad 1979:169).

1.3 Research questions

The study seeks to answer these two principal questions:

1) What are the grammatical components in which third year high school male students often make errors? This question has two parts:

(i) What is the percentage of the students who make errors?

(ii) What is the percentage of frequency of the grammatical errors?

(2) What are the general linguistic errors ? and what is the percentage of frequency?

Other questions to be answered are :

(1) What are the grammatical components students used in their writing? and what is the percentage of their frequency?

- (2) What is the difference between the basic grammatical components as seen by specialists and grammatical components on which this study concentrated?
- (3) What are the reasons which cause students to make both grammatical and general linguistic errors?
- (4) How do we compare the frequency of the use of grammatical components and the frequency of making errors?
- (5) What implications for practice does this study have which may contribute to remedy the problem of students making grammatical errors?

1.4 The study procedure

The plan of this study involves three main steps:

(1)Literature review: This is a detailed study of the use and misuse of grammar in Arabic in the Arab countries generally, but with special emphasis on Saudi Arabia. It also deals with complaints about the difficulty of the Arabic language in both Arabic teaching and learning, and the efforts made to simplify the language. I then discuss grammatical errors, the criteria by which they are identified and people's attitudes towards them. Finally, some related field studies are surveyed. The empirical studies which were surveyed covered two main areas: teaching the Arabic language and teaching grammar. More emphasis was paid to studies on grammatical errors analysis.

(2) Field Study: This was carried out to answer the research questions raised by the study. The field study was carried out with the following steps:

- (A) choosing a study sample which was representative of the Saudi society socially, culturally and economically.
- (B) requesting the sample students to write on two main topics, one of which was free, the other directed.
- (C) collecting students' writings and identifying their errors.
- (D) setting up a method for analysing and classifying the grammatical errors.

(3) Analysing and assessing the results:

The following steps were taken:

- (A) pointing out the grammatical errors.
- (B) classifying them into grammatical components.
- (C) studying probable reasons and factors which caused such mistakes.
- (D) discussing implications for practice.
- (E) discussing implication for future studies.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is significant for the following reasons:

First, it provides syllabus and instructional materials designers, especially those who work in the field of grammar, with the grammatical topics where mistakes made by third year students are frequent. Modern educational theories argue that it is necessary to choose grammatical topics to be taught to students according to their real needs. This is done through asking them to write in order to find out the grammatical components in which they make mistakes. Al-Sayed (1987) stated:

Designing grammatical subjects to be taught to students in Arabic should be built on objective foundations derived from actual life and not from guessing (p. 34).

Second, the study is not limited only to benefiting Arabic language curriculum designers by providing them with the topics where students' mistakes are frequent, it also shows them the grammatical components which were used in the students' writings. These have been classified and the frequency of use of each has been calculated.

Third, this study helps teachers to determine the goals of teaching Arabic grammar at high schools in the light of new trends which aim at placing the teaching of grammar on a functional basis. This means that the teacher chooses grammatical components which are closely related to the students' everyday experience, and this leads to helping them to master the four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Fourth, this study provides curriculum designers in Saudi Arabia with a vital scientific methodology. This methodology is not limited to designing the syllabus of Arabic grammar only, but is valid for other syllabuses such as dictation and mathematics, where analysis of students' errors may function as a cue to teaching students what they really need to learn.

Fifth, this study helps to uncover the reasons for making errors in grammatical components. For instance, the reason for making a mistake may be the effect of interference of colloquial Arabic on students' use of classical Arabic. The reason may also be that a grammatical rule is difficult or easily confused with

other rules. Therefore, knowing the reason behind the problem helps to solve it quickly as diagnosis of an illness helps the doctor to prescribe the right and suitable medicine.

Sixth, this study paves the way for other research projects in the field of teaching and learning Arabic grammar at all levels in Saudi Arabia, especially in relation to understanding grammatical errors, which are common at every level.

Seventh, even though this study focuses only on grammatical errors in the writings of third year high school students and the results are primarily of concern to the curriculum designers of this stage, it can also be important, I believe, for all lower educational levels: elementary, preparatory and first and second year at high school. It is also equally important for the university level. Its importance for the lower levels lies in the fact that by completing high school education, a student is supposed to have studied all grammatical components. The study, therefore, gives syllabus designers and educators an idea as to what extent students benefited from their education in all previous levels. Its importance for the university level is that the results of this study reveal areas of inadequacy even after such a long educational journey, and hence draw attention to these issues in designing the curriculum for the University level. It would be dangerous to assume too much applicability to other levels of Education.

This study, however, is restricted by certain limitations. It is only limited to grammatical errors found in the students' writings. Other types of errors such as spoken, spelling, punctuation and composition errors are excluded. The target of this study is public schools under the aegis of the Ministry of Education; other types of

schools such as private or public schools under the administration of other governmental bodies are beyond the scope of this study. Girls students are not included in the study as Saudi Arabia does not have co-education for religious and traditional reasons. This study also is limited to the students who speak the local dialect in Najd Region, where Riyadh is located. Each main dialect in the country has a different interference with formal Arabic.

1.6 Definition of terms

Because some terms have broad meaning which may lead, sometimes, to confusion, I have selected some terms which are frequently used in this study and have given their specific definition. These terms are as follows:

Grammatical error: Any form of violation of the rules of Arabic grammar found in grammar text books of the public schools in Saudi Arabia. The term “error”, however, is used interchangeably with the term “mistake”.

Grammar: Signifies the means by which the relationship between words is shown and includes:

- (A) inflection, which involves changes in the form of words
- (B) word order, which is the agreement of words in relation to each other
- (C) grammatical joining words, which signify the grammatical relationship.

Common error: A grammatical error or general linguistic error committed by 20% of the sample of the writing test or more.

General linguistic error: Any form of deviation from Arabic language in general such as slang, foreign words etc. (there are seven categories of these as explained in the method and procedure chapter).

Testing: A process of collecting information about the learner's competence and performance in Arabic grammar.

Type of error: A category that contains a number of individual errors of the same nature is an error type. For example, each individual adverb (*dharf*) error, including adverbs of time and adverbs of place make up an error type.

Grammatical component: refers to the main grammatical units taught in Arabic classes such as adverbs, prepositions, adjectives etc.

1.7 The organisation of the study

This introductory chapter would be incomplete without an indication of the layout of the study as a whole.

The first chapter outlines the research problem, the purpose and the significance of the study. It also discusses briefly the limitations of the study

Chapter Two reviews the background to Arabic grammar in the Saudi Educational system. It also discusses the development of the educational system in Saudi Arabia. It highlights particularly the high school system. Chapter Three presents a theoretical discussion and review of the literature concerning the concepts employed in the study. Chapter Four examines the issue of grammatical rules as a cause of complaint. Chapter Five reviews the efforts to simplify Arabic grammatical rules as a reaction to the overall size of Arabic grammar. Chapter Six contains the methodological and statistical part of this study. Chapter Seven presents and analyses the findings of the study and the final chapter summarises and discusses the main results. In the last Chapter I present the major conclusions of the research and discuss its limitations. The implications for practice are also set out along with implications for future studies.

1.8 Concluding remarks

This chapter has outlined the topic tackled in this research, and the circumstances which impressed upon the researcher the seriousness of the problem of common grammatical errors which occur frequently among secondary school students in Saudi Arabia.

This study has been designed to answer seven main questions. An outline was given of the research methodology, which commenced with a review of the literature, went on to the conduct of a field study, and ended with the analysis and evaluation of the research results.

An explanation has been given of the significance of this study and its anticipated contribution to solving the problem it addresses. It is hoped that it will

constitute a useful and important source of information which will help the planners of the curriculum, teachers and also students, as well as laying a foundation for comparable studies in different areas.

The limitations of the research have been explained, and key concepts which frequently occur within the research have been defined.

In order to set in context the problem of grammatical errors, which are common among succeeding generations of Saudi students at secondary school level, and to pave the way for the discussion which follows, it is desirable to provide the reader with background information about the Saudi educational system. This is the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter Two

Arabic Grammar in the Saudi Education System

Chapter Two

Arabic Grammar in the Saudi Education System

2.1 Preface

In order to ensure a full understanding of the theme of this study, a general background to Saudi Arabia is given with particular emphasis on the education, system and teaching and learning of Arabic grammar within that system.

2.2 Saudi Arabia: location and significance

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia extends over two thirds of the Arabian Peninsula, approximately 865.000 square miles. It is located between 20-30 degrees latitude and 50-52 longitude. Saudi Arabia is bordered on the north by Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait, on the south by Yemen, on the East by the Arabian Gulf, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman and on the West, by the Red Sea (see fig 2.1).

The importance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is indisputable. First, it is strategically situated as a bridge between the Western world and the continent of Asia. Al- Farsy (1978) says:

....with Africa on one side and Iran and South Asia on the other, it is in the middle of the strategically important Indian Ocean area which is a zone of contention between East and West centres of power.

(Al-Farsy, 1978 : Introduction).

Another, more important, reason for the significance of Saudi Arabia is that the country is ranked as the third largest oil producer which adds more economic and political weight to its position among the nations of the world.

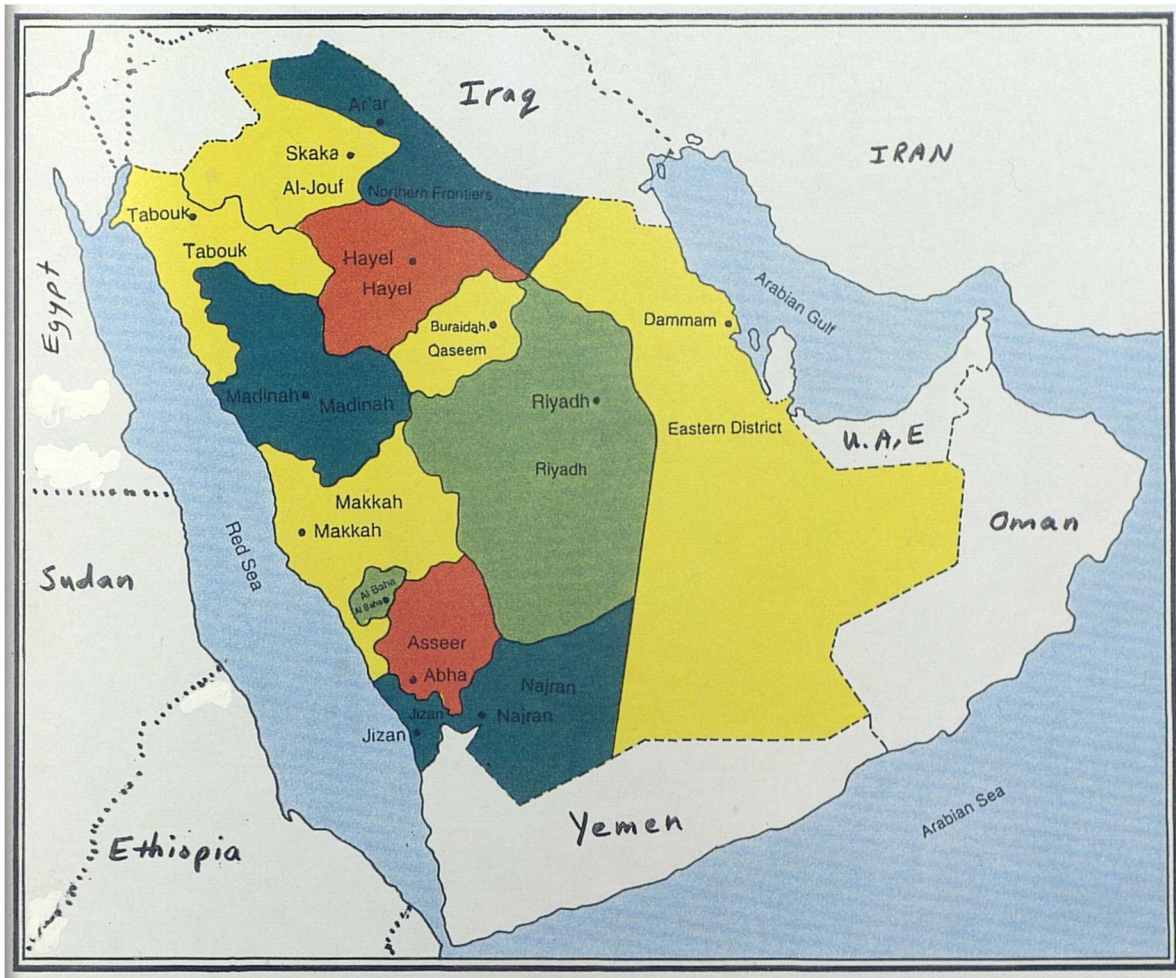
Third, and most important, is that Saudi Arabia is viewed as the holy land for millions of Muslims all over the world. These and other reasons add to Saudi Arabia's unique position in the world.

According to the census of 1994, Saudi Arabia had a population of twelve million (Ministry of Information, 1994: 7); four million out of the total population belong to the immigrant workforce.

The country (see fig 2.1) is divided into twelve districts. District of Riyadh where the capital city Riyadh is located, occupies the middle of the country; District of Makkah, District of Madinah, Eastern District, District of Qaseem, District of Hayel, District of Al-Jouf, District of Northern Frontiers, District of Tabouk, District of Al-Baha, District of Asseer and District of Najran.

The main concern, in the context of this present study, is education which is discussed in the next section in the form of a general overview of the development of education in Saudi Arabia and its aims as stated by official policy. Teaching Arabic grammar within the education system and related issues are also included.

Figure 2.1



MAP OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Source: Development of Education.
Ministry of Education (1992)

2.3 Arabic language and the education system

Although the focus of the study is on analysing and classifying students' grammatical errors found in their written work, it is useful to provide some background on the education system as a whole. A discussion of teaching and learning Arabic grammar within the education system is essential too as this will pave the way for a better understanding of the research problem.

Until the ^{establishment} creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, education followed for the most part traditional religious lines and was largely conducted in the *Kuttāb* (an old form of students' class), mosque or *madrāsah* (school) as had been done for years. However, it was found that the traditional schools alone could not supply the trained personnel required. The first attempt to create a new school system began with the founding in 1926 of a Directorate of Education in Makkah charged with the task of supervising education policy in the area. The first modern secondary school was established in 1937.

The growing importance attached to education was reflected in the decision in 1953 to upgrade the Directorate of Education to the status of the Ministry of Education.

King Fahad was the first Minister of the new Ministry of Education. In conformity with the size of the country, the Ministry of Education established several administrative offices throughout the country in order to facilitate rapid and responsive decision-making. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the curriculum, textbooks, teaching methods, and all school facilities. Education is free

at all levels and, in addition, students at University level are given a monthly allowance (Ministry of Education 1986:9).

2.4 Educational organisation in Saudi Arabia

No changes can be proposed by this study without recognising the hierarchy of educational authorities, that is, who makes the policies, and how they are implemented.

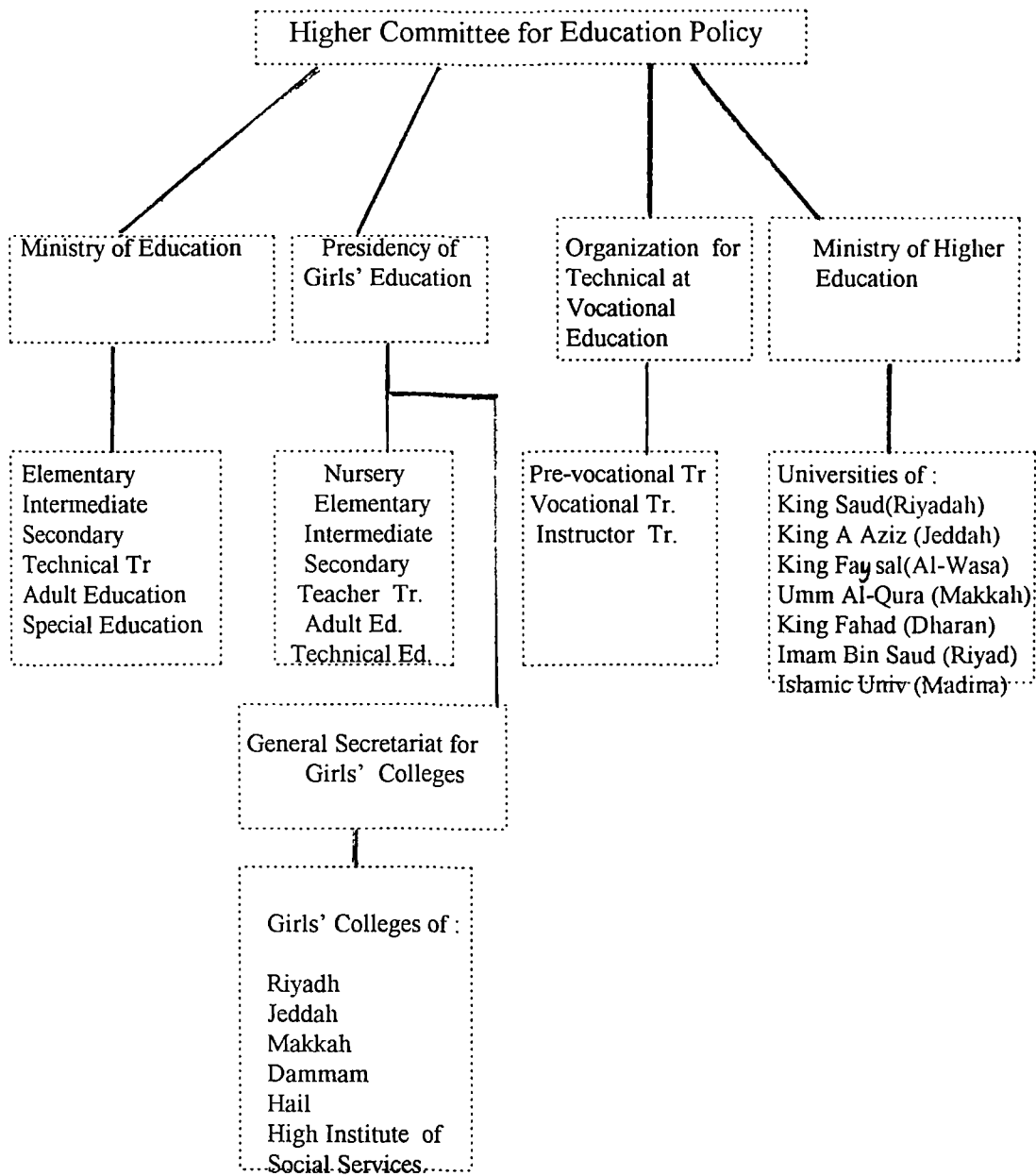
There are four main authorities responsible for educational policy and its implementation in Saudi Arabia. They are supervised by the Higher Committee for Educational Policy (H.C.F.E.P), headed by the King. The Committee studies any policies proposed for educational development and approves them for implementation by the authorities concerned.

The four sectors responsible to the state as represented by the H.C.F.E.P. are:
(see fig: 2-2)

. Ministry of Education

This supervises the educational affairs of boys throughout the Kingdom. The Ministry was established in 1953 replacing the General Department of Education. It is responsible not only for the supervision of all three stages of boys' education, but also the training of teachers, the supervision of adult, special and technical education and the planning of programmes and cultural affairs. The Ministry is headed by the Minister of Education who is responsible for a number of departments and assisted by

Figure 2-2



Source: Ministry of Education: Educational Development Data Centre 1986:52.

✓

a Deputy Minister who is in turn assisted by seven deputies (Ministry of Education 1986 fig no. 2-3).

. The General Presidency of Girls' Education

Education for girls started officially only 36 years ago in 1960. The General Presidency of Girls' Education has the main authority for planning and directing female education at almost all levels of education, with the exception of some parts of higher education.

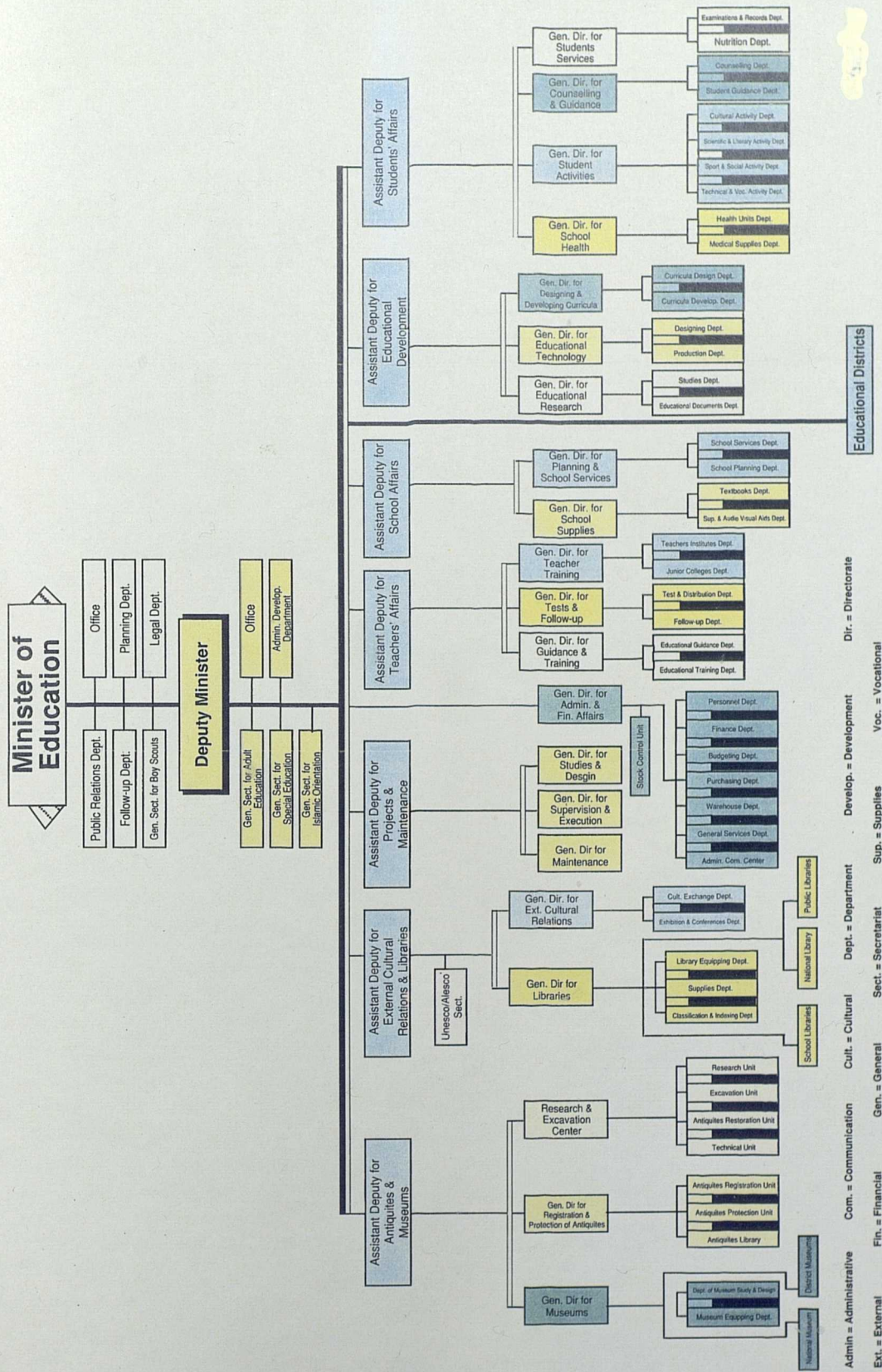
The general education system of public education for females starts after the Kindergarten. 6 years at elementary level, 3 years at intermediate level and 3 years at secondary level.

The Director of the General Presidency, who is a male, has the same powers as a Minister, including a vote in the Council of Ministers.

In the field of curriculum development and syllabus design, decisions are taken by both the Minister of Education and the Presidency: experts and advisers from both authorities co-operate and are jointly responsible for any decision regarding subjects as well as school matters. Any joint proposition would be implemented after approval by the H.C.F.E.P.



Figure 2-3
Organizational Plan of the Ministry of Education, 1991



Source : Development of Education
Ministry of Education (1992)

. Ministry of Higher Education

This is responsible for all forms of Education beyond the various types at the secondary stage: general secondary or technical or vocational secondary.

The Ministry was established in 1975, but functioned previously under the Ministry of Education. It is responsible for supervising higher education programmes for males and females, for scholarships, international academic relations, educational offices abroad and for providing all sectors of higher education with the necessary technical and working manpower.

. General Organisation for Technical Vocational Training

Vocational and technical education are available for males in both the public and private sector. Such education was previously the responsibility of the Ministry of Education but was brought under the supervision of the General Organisation which was established in 1980 as a result of the growing interest in vocational education.

2.5 A critical view

A closer look at the role of the different sources of educational authority, particularly the Ministry of Education, shows that the strong vertical hierarchy and the large number of possibly overlapping agencies - deputy ministerial, assistant deputy, and secretariat - may restrict the range of subjects taught across the system and across the curriculum. This contrasts with the educational system in Britain where there are supposed to be checks and balances which prevent any one authority

from exercising a monopoly of influence over schools, curriculum, teachers and pupils. The apparent administrative diversity of the Saudi System is likely to affect the way subjects such as Arabic language in general and grammar in particular are viewed by the different authorities.

2.6 Education stages

The present education system consists of four stages: a Kindergarten stage (which is optional and not a necessary condition for admission to the next stages) the elementary stage, intermediate stage, and secondary stage (See Fig No.2-4).

The elementary level covers the first six years of formal education. First and second grade classes are each taught by a single teacher who teaches all subjects in the following grades; there are usually separate teachers for science.

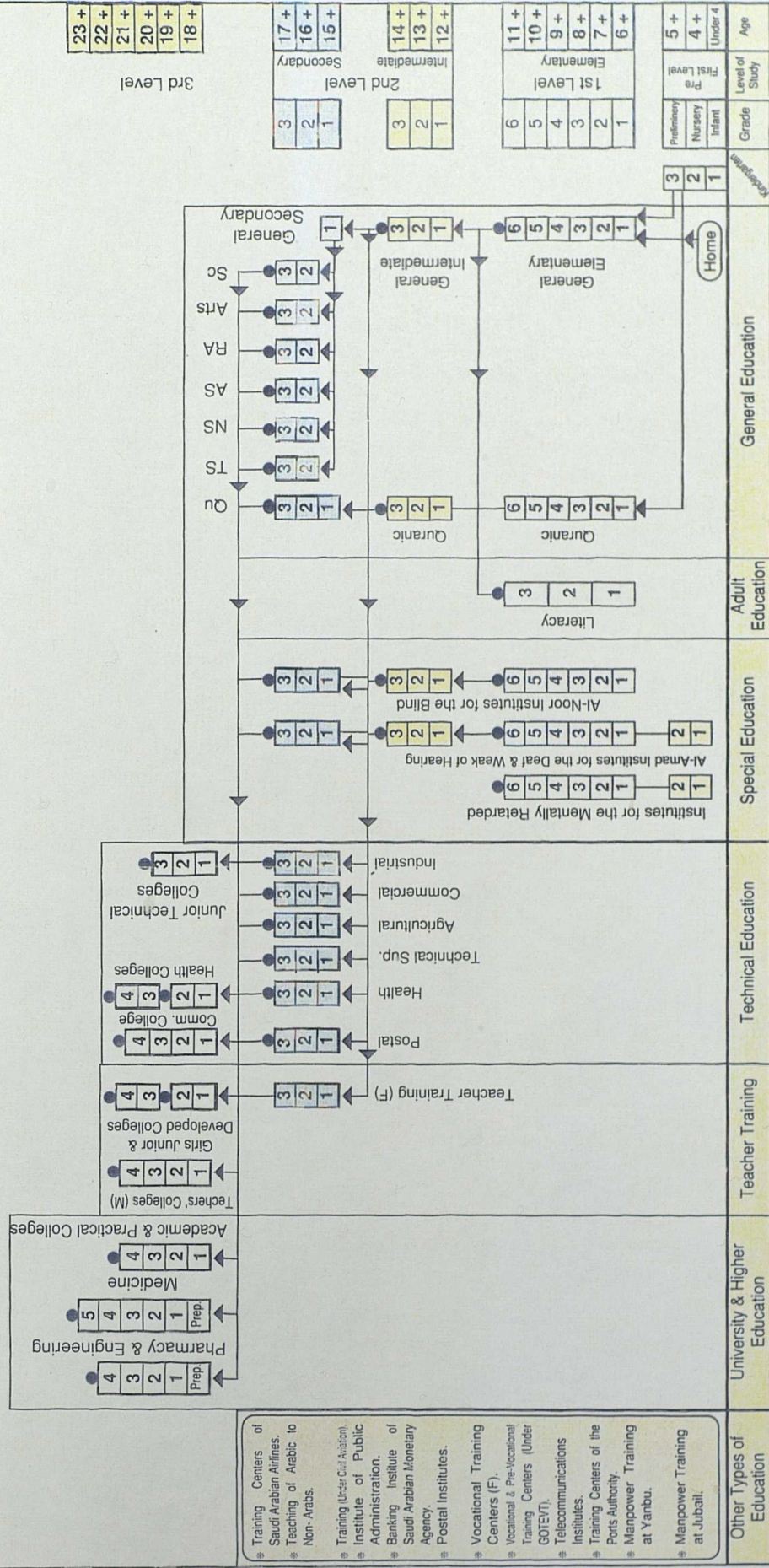
Intermediate level is a three-year (beginning at 12 + years) period which prepares students to continue on to general secondary schools, nursing training, commercial, communication and technical or other secondary schools and institutions which prepare students for various form of employment.

2.7 Secondary schools in the education system

As this study focuses on the third year-secondary schools, detailed information will be given here about syllabus, aims and the recent development of the secondary stage system.

Figure 2-4

FLOW CHART OF EDUCATION IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA, 1994



● End of a Stage.
 AS = Administrative and Social Sciences - Comm. = Communications - F = Female - GOTEVT = General Organization for Technical Education & Vocational Training
 M = Male - NS = Natural Sciences - Prep = Preparatory - Qu = Qur'anic - RA = Religion and Arabic - Sc = Science - TS = Technological (applied) Sciences - Sup = Supervisors

Source : Development of Education Ministry of Education (1992)

Education at the secondary stage lasts for three years and begins when a student obtains an intermediate stage certificate. This stage ends with the award of a secondary stage certificate. The Ministry of Education sets admission conditions or requirements for secondary schools to ensure the fulfilment of various needs and direct each student towards a suitable field. The secondary stage follows a study plan co-ordinated by the educational authorities. The secondary stage is preparation for college/university or for a professional career.

As was mentioned earlier, the duration of the secondary stage is three years. Only the first year of this stage is general in nature. In the last two years students can either specialise in Science or Arts. At the end of this stage, students must take a comprehensive examination which is administered to all students and run by the Ministry of Education for boys, and for girls by the General Presidency of Girls Education. Students who pass the final examination receive a high school certificate which entitles them to pursue undergraduate studies

• **Aims of secondary stage**

1. Continuing the fulfilment of loyalty to God only, letting all deeds be performed to please Him and seeing to it that they are frank and honest, according to His Laws.
2. Consolidating the Islamic faith through which a student can have a proper outlook on the universe, man, life on earth and the Hereafter, and providing him with the basic notions and the Islamic culture which can make him feel proud of Islam, capable of spreading the Message and of defending it.
3. Enable him to be an active member of the Islamic Nation under the flag of one God.
4. Fulfilment of loyalty to the Muslim Nation in general and to his own nation (the King of Saudi Arabia) in particular with a deep vision, an aspiration for the highest social standing, and strong physical constitution, compatible with his age.

5. Taking care of the capabilities of the student and his various inclinations which begin to flower during this period, and directing such capabilities and inclinations in a manner suitable for him and in a way which can realise the aims of Islamic education according to its general meaning.
6. Developing scientific thinking in a student and instilling in him the spirit of research, experimentation, detailed systematic study, use of references, and habituation to sound study methods.
7. Providing opportunities for capable students and preparing them to pursue their studies-at various levels- in higher institutes and university colleges of various specifications.
8. Preparing all students for work in the various fields of activity at a proper level.
9. The graduation of a number of vocationally and technically qualified persons to meet the needs of the country for the first stage of education and to perform religious duties, technical (agricultural, commercial and industrial) and other jobs.
10. Establishing family consciousness for the sake of founding sound Muslim families.
11. Preparing students to fight spiritually and physically for the sake of God.
12. Taking care of youth according to Muslim principles, remedying their intellectual and emotional problems, and helping them to pass this difficult period of their life successfully and safely.
13. Letting the students develop good habits of useful reading and the desire to acquire further knowledge, perform good deeds, and utilise their leisure time in a beneficial manner that will enrich their personalities and uplift the conditions of their society
14. Building up positive consciousness by means of which the students can face destructive ideas and misleading trends (Al-Zaid M. 1982:49-51).

2.8 The development of secondary school education

In 1975, the Ministry of Education with the support of government, began to look at ways to change the secondary school system to relate it more closely to academic and vocational education and to improve its standards so as to enable

students to take up a career or higher education. These efforts resulted in the establishment of some new experimental types of secondary school. These were:

2.8.1 The comprehensive secondary school

During the fifth National Development Plan, the Ministry of Education established four comprehensive secondary schools as an experiment. They sought to achieve the traditional secondary aims, while avoiding some of the negative features of the old system (Ministry of Education 1992:15). This experiment was influenced by the American and English school system. The schools adopted the credit hours system where students must complete 120 approved hours of study plus 30 hours of activities. The school sections were:

- (A) Religious and Humanities Section
- (B) Social Language Section
- (C) Science and Mathematics Section
- (D) Polytechnic Section (Okaz 25.2.1992:5).

2.8.2 The developed secondary modern school

This system was introduced in 1985 and was gradually applied (over ten years) to all secondary schools under the direction of the Ministry of Education within ten years. This system was designed to achieve traditional secondary school goals and to introduce new programmes for all subjects which were closer to the needs of society. Students had to do 168 credit hours to finish this stage. These hours were divided into:

- (A) General programmes of required core courses
- (B) Specialised programmes for Majors in:

- . Islamic and literary studies
- . Humanitarian and administrative science
- . Natural sciences, physics, mathematics, Chemistry and Biology

(C) Elective programmes (Ministry of Education 1986:21)

In 1991 the Ministry of Education issued a decision to phase out this system within three years and allow a return to the traditional system. It came to this decision because it was felt that the secondary modern school was not appropriate to the customs of Saudi Society. It was also influenced by the shortage of equipment and school building (Ministry of Education, 1992:19).

The new traditional system is again of three year's duration. Students follow a general programme in the first year and choose one out of four majors in the following years. These majors are:

- (A) Religious and Arabic Studies
- (B) Administrative Studies
- (C) Natural Sciences
- (D) Technical Studies.

This new traditional system has not been applied in all high schools yet (I visited the Ministry of Education in Riyadh in December 1995 to update this information).

2.9 The Egyptian influence

A Medical Doctor, when diagnosing his patient, would look back to his medical history and environment. A similar situation holds with the problem of Arabic grammar within the Saudi curriculum and we should shed some light on the factors that influenced the construction of the education system and the curriculum setting in Saudi Arabia.

Undoubtedly, the Egyptian education system was the most advanced in the Arab world, and its influence reached most Arab countries. Saudi Arabia, like many Arab countries, relied heavily on Egyptian developments in the field of education. Its educational policy, curricula, textbooks, administration, and teachers were linked to those of Egypt for many years. Indeed, until recently, Saudi School graduates were able to gain admission to Egyptian Universities, as there were no universities in Saudi Arabia. As oil revenue increased in the 1930s, however, the Saudi rulers increased their expenditure on such areas as education, social services, housing, and hospitals. The impact of oil revenue was most strongly felt on the development of the educational system. Expenditure on education was the largest single investment in the Saudi five years development plan. This meant the building of more schools and institutes which needed well-qualified teachers and administrators - hence more reliance on Egyptians as the number of highly qualified Saudi teachers was very modest. An example of such reliance is the number of non-Saudi (mainly Egyptian) teachers at intermediate level. In 1975/76, the total number of full time teachers was 8,788; more than half this number, 6,495, were non-Saudis. This number increased in 1985 to a total of 32,990 teachers. The Saudi government had two aims in employing such a high number of non-Saudi nationals. The first was to facilitate all aspects of

the development of education, and the second was to give the Saudis time during which more nationals would gradually become well-qualified before shouldering responsibility for the system and ultimately taking over.

2.10 Grammar in the study plan

In the old system which was in operation until 1991, Arabic language subjects (grammar, rhetoric and criticism, literature, composition and reading) were taught and the number of classes (per week) for each subject differed according to whether the students were Arts or Science specialists.(see Table No.2-5). The new secondary system which started in 1992 has kept the same Arabic subjects, but the number of classes differ according to the students' speciality (see Table No. 2-6) (Ministry of Education 1991:162).

. General aims of teaching Arabic language

Following the world-wide attention given to Saudi Arabia after the discovery of oil and the sharp increase in oil revenue, the Saudi Government allocated massive investment to eliminating illiteracy and to promoting the rapid development of its educational system. However, the aims of education remained ill-defined, simply emphasising the need for the rapid preparation of a generation that could read and write and have a basic knowledge of the Arabic language as well as of other disciplines in order to meet the country's needs. Today, more precise aims of teaching Arabic language and grammar in particular have been identified.

Figure 2-5

Table (2-6)
The Secondary Stages' Study Plan Until 1991
(Number of Periods per week)
Traditional System

Subject		Ist Grade	Arts Section		Science Section	
			2nd Grade	3rd Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade
	Holy Quran	1	1	1	1	1
	Islamic Tradition (Hadith & Culture)	1	1	1	1	1
	Islamic Theology	1	1	1	1	1
	Islamic Jurisprudence	1	1	-	1	-
	Total	4	4	3	4	3
	Grammar & Morphology	3	3	3	2	2
	Rhetoric & Criticism	1	2	2	-	-
	Literature (Texts History)	3	3	3	1	1
	Composition	1	1	1	1*	-
	Reading	1	2	2	-	-
	Total	9	11	11	4	3
	History	2	3	3	-	-
	Geography	2	3	3	-	-
	Psychology	-	2	-	-	-
	Sociology	-	-	2	-	-
	Total	4	8	8	-	-
Maths	Boys	5	-	-	7	7
	Girls	4	-	-	7	7
	Physics	2	-	-	4	4
	Chemistry	2	-	-	4	4
	Biology	2	-	-	3	3
	Geology	-	-	-	1	1
	Total	6	-	-	12	12
Physical	Education for Boys	1	1	1	1	1
Home	Economics for Girls	2	2	-	2	-
English	Language	4	4	4	4	4
Grand Total	Boys	33	28	27	32	30
	Girls	33	29	26	32	28

*This period is divided between composition and the one-subject book.

Source: Ministry of Education, Development of Education in Saudi Arabia: 1986-1988, Riyadh 1988.93

Figure 2-6

The New Secondary School Study Plan
(Number of Periods per Week)

Subject	1st Gr	Religious & Arabic Classes		Administrative & Social Science		Science section		Technical Section	
		2nd Gr.	3rd Gr	2nd Gr	3rd Gr	2nd Gr	3rd Gr	2nd Gr	3rd Gr.
Holy Quran	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
Interpretation	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Islamic Tradition(Hadith)	1.	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Islamic Theology(Tawhid)	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Islamic Jurisprudence	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	5	12	12	6	6	5	5	5	5
Grammar & Morphology	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Rhetoric & Criticism	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Literature	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reading	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Composition	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	6	9	9	4	4	3	3	3	3
Administration Science	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	-
Economic Science	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Accounting	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	5	6	-	-	-	-
History	1	1	1	2	2	-	-	-	-
Geography	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Psychology	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Sociology	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	2	3	3	5	4	-	-	-	-
Physics	2	-	-	-	-	4	4	Technical Studies	Technical Studies
Chemistry	2	-	-	-	-	4	4		
Biology	2	-	-	-	-	4	4		
Earth Science	-	-	-	-	-	1	1		
Total	6	-	-	-	-	13	13	13	13
Mathematics	5	-	-	3	3	6	6	6	6
Statistics	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	5	-	-	4	4	6	6	6	6
English Language	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Computer Science	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Library & Research	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Physical Education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Activities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grand Total	32	32	32	32	32	34	34	34	34

Source:Ministry of Education, Educational Documentation,No.31-32 issued by the Centre for Statistical Data and Education, Riyadh,SA.1991-1992:166.(Arabic). Also, Ministry of Education,Ministerial Decree No.32/1/10d149/137/ on 2/8/1411H Jan.1992,unpublished:3.

The general aims of Arabic language teaching as stated by the Ministry of Education are as follows:-

1. To keep up with the Book of Allah and His prophet's tradition, to be conscious of the principles of Islam and the basics of its law, to be proud of the constituents of Islamic civilisation, and to adopt the appropriate means to revive it.
2. To revive the language of the Nation and to promote it among its people to confirm Islamic brotherhood and bonds.
3. To enhance the student's linguistic potency and to impart to him the skills of appropriate expression of the thoughts and meanings which are stimulated inside him.
4. To consolidate his literary faculty to enable him to perceive language styles and to distinguish their qualities with critical appreciation.
5. To develop his speech in accordance with Arabic grammar rules so that he does not make grammatical mistakes in either reading or writing.
6. To help him understand the Glorious Koran and the prophetic tradition and to give him the ability to enjoy the aesthetic values of both eloquent poetry and prose.
7. To familiarise him with Arabic, to make him accustomed to consulting classical Arabic references, to summarise what he reads and to enable him to do research.

. Aims of Teaching Grammar

1. To accustom the student to Arabic style, to make him aware of mistakes in what he reads or hears, and to make him avoid such mistakes in both reading and writing.
2. To help the student understand properly what he reads and hears.
3. To boost his general and specialised knowledge through eloquent and useful drills and applications.
4. To enrich the student's store of linguistic treasures through the fundamental method of training him in derivation techniques and the use of lexicons, etc. (Ministry of Education, 1991: 100).

2.11 Issues in teaching grammar in Saudi schools

. Classroom

Students in every school and at all stages, whether primary, intermediate or secondary, are seated in rows in the classrooms and the teacher faces them in front of the blackboard. Most classrooms are small in size and the average number of students in each class is thirty-five. Such a number in a relatively small classroom is not ideal for student - student interaction nor for the group work that is needed for a better teaching/learning situation; i.e. for communicative activities.

. Time

The number of grammar periods is two or three sessions per week, of forty-five minutes duration each. That is to say, in a school year of thirty-five weeks, a full, tightly structured syllabus should be covered in 105 sessions or 70 sessions (1112.5 hours for 105 sessions and 52.5 hours for 70 sessions). Such time is very short indeed in relation to the heavy load of grammatical components which have to be covered during the said thirty-five weeks.

. Teachers

No precise figures of the types and the number of qualifications held are available, but according to the Ministry of Education's regulations a teacher either at intermediate level or secondary level should hold at least B.A.; some teachers have continued their higher studies to achieve either a higher diploma, MA. M.Sc. or Ph.D. Before 1980, most of the grammar teachers were not Saudis; the majority were expatriate teachers who had been recruited from different countries such as

Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Palestine. As a consequence, a variety of experience, skill and background knowledge was likely to be found in our schools. In the late 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, the Saudi Teachers have replaced almost all the expatriate teachers, a substitution planned by the Saudi educational authority (Ministry of Information 1994:17).

Saudi Teachers of the Arabic language in general and grammar in particular have two types of training in Saudi Arabia. First, programmes offered by colleges of Arabic Language and Colleges of Arts (Arabic Language Departments). Students joining these colleges are professionally trained as teachers of the Arabic language. And second, programmes run by colleges of Arts with Arabic language as major lasting four years. Students at these colleges are not educationally trained. Graduate of Colleges of Arts are usually asked to take a diploma or course in education offered by the Education Departments at Universities as well as the Ministry of Education.

The current trend to increase the Saudization of education has led, on the one hand, to less reliance on non-nationals, but on the other hand, has created another problem in the teaching of grammar in Saudi high schools. It has led to an emphasis on the quantitative rather than qualitative aspect of teacher education. University graduates from literature and linguistics sections as well as graduates from Islamic studies colleges are placed as secondary grammar school teachers with little teaching practice and with irrelevant qualifications.

. Examinations

Moving from one year/grade to another requires the students to sit a written examination prepared by the School at the end of every school year. Promotion from one stage to another is subject to passing a national examination. This creates considerable pressure on both teachers and students.

Teachers for example are supposed to prepare the students for examinations and are required to finish the syllabus before the examination. Teachers also pay a lot of attention to the examinations because the rate of success among students can eventually affect their record in a positive or negative manner and influence their annual report and promotion. Another negative effect is the anxiety about the examination result which has an unsatisfactory psychological effect on students and their parents: failing the examination is seen as degrading.

Such pressure consequently has a negative effect on the teaching/learning process in the sense that many teachers are concerned with completing the course in the time allowed rather than with the learning that takes place. Life in the classroom is, therefore, devoted to preparing for the examination and extra curricular activities that are not measured by the examination are not welcomed.

. Grammar syllabus

As mentioned earlier, Saudi Arabia relied heavily on neighbouring countries in developing its educational systems. The Egyptian curricula, textbooks and system were borrowed and used as models with little or no modification. Inevitably, some of the weaknesses of the Egyptian system were transported to Saudi Arabia. In

particular, the Egyptian system was designed to operate on a low budget and made no provision for the use of technologically sophisticated teaching aids. In Saudi Arabia, there were no such financial constraints.

2.12 Concluding remarks

The circumstances which have brought about the perceived weaknesses of students in the secondary stage of education in Saudi Arabia in their comprehension of Arabic grammar is a very important matter. This chapter has presented a brief account of the background to this problem, as well as its significance. The educational system of any state is an important factor in success or failure of the student in learning such a subject as grammar. In this chapter the Saudi system has been presented, with particular emphasis on the secondary stage, which is the population of concern in the present study.

It has been emphasised that Egyptian influence is much felt in the Saudi education system, and that this has been beneficial in some respects. However, some of the negative aspects of Egyptian influence on the educational process as a whole were noted, particularly on the teaching of grammar.

The aims of teaching grammar, and related matters such as the texts used, the time devoted to grammatical studies, the quality of teacher and the role of examinations have also been discussed.

Grammar is to language what the skeleton is to the human body. The Arabic language, the subject of grammar, and the existence of errors, are all linked, and are basic elements in this research. They will be discussed in the next chapter in order to provide a context for the subsequent analysis of the research data.

Chapter Three

The Arabic Grammar and Grammatical Errors: Background

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3.1 Preface

When someone goes to a doctor suffering from pain or disease, the doctor has to investigate the patient's medical history in general and the history of the pain or disease in particular. In the same way, the committing of grammatical errors can be seen as the symptom of a disease from which students suffer. It is, therefore, important to examine the historical background of the Arabic language, including the circumstances which necessitated the establishment of grammar. It is then possible to focus more closely on the concept of error, the committing of error in language use and the criteria of correctness used by both ancient and modern Arabs and those used in this study. These factors form the focus of attention in this chapter.

3.2 The position of Arabic language

The Arabic language is one of the most important languages of the world together with Greek, Latin, English, French and Spanish. This is due to the unique position it has occupied in history as well as the great number of people who speak it : approximately 250 million throughout the world. Balogun (1969) stated that:

For well over a thousand years, Arabic has been the universal language of Islamic theology, philosophy, law and science. It was through Islam that the language came into the limelight, and became the language that controlled an empire which stretched from the Atlantic eastward to the western borders of China (p. 33).

Among the 3500 languages of the whole world, the Arabic language was chosen in 1973 to be one of the international languages with English, French, Russian, Spanish and Chinese. World organisations, such as the United Nations and its sister organisations have endowed the Arabic language with this important role. In Africa, the Organisation of African Unity has chosen Arabic along with French and English as a working language (Bakallah 1981:7 and Balogun 1969: 33).

There is no doubt that the Arabic language has a status which has not been shared and cannot be shared by any other language. It has a long history which goes back more than two thousand years. Amazingly, old Arabic can still be understood by Arabs no matter how much modern education they have received. The Koran which was revealed to the prophet Mohammed fifteen centuries ago can still be read and understood by Arabic-speaking peoples all over the world. The Arabic language is widely used by present day writers, and the press as well as in radio and television programmes all over the Arabic-speaking nations. Scholars, research students and learned people use it daily in their conversations and discussions.

3.3 Arabic language and Muslims

The Arabic language is a very significant language for Muslims who form approximately one fifth of the human race. This is simply because their holy book called Koran and the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed are recorded in this language.

Muslims throughout the world must perform their daily prayers in the Arabic language irrespective of their own country of origin or their own national language.

Inayatullah said:

...In every city, town and village through the Muslim world, the silence of the early dawn is broken by solemn and melodious chanting of the Arabic athan (Call for prayer), with the *Mu'athin* (Caller) calling the faithful to the morning prayer. Thus, the first words which fall upon the ears of the believers every morning are those of the Arabic language (1969 :5).

Ibn Manzur (1956) mentioned in the introduction of his famous book *Lisān 'al-carab* The Tongue of Arabs that God made the Arabic language superior to all other languages and enhanced it further by revealing the Koran through it and making it the language of Paradise.

As evidence of the importance of learning Arabic for Muslims, Abu Hamed Al-Ghazaly(n.d) who died: 1111 mentioned some of the traditions which are directly attributed to the Prophet Mohammed; for example: "The best act of worship that may be performed by the community is the recitation of the Koran. The best amongst you is he who learns and teaches the Koran". In his discussion of those who think that the Arabic language, like Latin, will perish, Mahmoud Taymur stated that they overlook the fact that Arabic, unlike Latin, is the language of a revealed religion and is destined to exist as long as the Koran and Islam exist (Taymur 1959 : 6-7). Many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars alike believe that the Arabic language could not have existed for fifteen centuries had it not been the language of the holy Koran.

3.4 Arabic and Biblical studies

The Arabic language has proved to be of significance in biblical studies. It has

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3.4 Arabic and Biblical studies

The Arabic language has proved to be of significance in biblical studies. It has

helped a great deal in explaining some of the terms and usages found in the Bible

Guillaume (1931) stated that:

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century there had been constant recourse to Arabic for the explanation of rarer words and forms in Hebrew for Arabic, though more than a thousand years the junior as a literary language, is philologically the senior language by countless centuries. Perplexing phenomena in Hebrew can often be explained as solitary and archaic survivals of form which are frequent and common in the cognate Arabic. Words and idioms whose precise sense had been lost in Jewish tradition, receive a ready and convincing explanation from the same source. Indeed, no serious student of the old Testament can afford to dispense with a first hand knowledge of Arabic. The pages of any critical commentary on the old Testament will illustrate the debt that Biblical exegesis owes to Arabic. (p. 9)

One of the early Orientalists who recognised the importance of and the need for Arabic in the explanation of the old Testament was Albert Schulters (died in 1750). The principles of Biblical exegesis were explained in his dissertation entitled "The use of Arabic in the Interpretation of the Scripture" (Inayatullah 1969:15).

3.5 Arabic as a Semitic language

The languages of the world are divided in a number of tribes and families, according to their structural relations and the interrelation of the history of their evolution. The Semitic family is one of the most important of these language families. It includes Phoenician, Syriac or Aramaic, Assyrian, Hebrew and Arabic (Bakallah 1981 :3). Convincing historical evidence indicates that Arabia was the homeland of the Semitic people and languages (Hitti 1970 :10). The migration of Semitic groups started approximately in 3500 B. C. The Assyrians migrated from the Arabian peninsula to Northern Iraq, the Phoenicians to Lebanon and the Arameans to the valley of Bija situated between Syria and Lebanon.

Though these people originally spoke the ancient Semitic mother language, two factors have affected and widened the gaps between the various dialects spoken by these people: firstly the different environment in which those groups eventually settled and secondly, the social and linguistic situation which they encountered. These dialects eventually developed into separate languages. The Semitic languages can be subdivided into two main divisions: Southern Semitic languages including Arabic, South Arabian and the Abyssinian languages; and the Northern Semitic languages which include Aramaic, the Canaanite, Hebrew, Akkadian (Assyro-Babylonian), and Phoenician languages (Wright 1890 : 7). Chejne (1969) further said that:

The earliest North Western Semitic inscriptions go back to the middle of the second millennium B.C. The South West Semitic group includes the areas of Arabic and Ethiopia, and Arabic and Ethiopian are the two major languages from this geographic division. (p. 25)

The first inscriptions in Southern Arabia date from the eighth century B.C.; those from Northern Arabia seem to be much later. The poetic Arabic that appears to have developed into the language of the Qura'n has not been recorded before the sixth century A.D. (ibid: 25).

The word Semitic is derived from the Bible where Shem or Sam, one of prophet Noah's sons, is considered to be the father of the Semitic people. August Ludwig Schlozer, a German professor, was the first one who used the term "Semitic languages" in about 1781. The first person who pointed out that Syriac, Arabic and Hebrew derive from one and the same language was Ibn Hazm, a Muslim Andalusian from Muslim Spain in 900 A. D. (Bakallah 1981:4).

Hitti (1970) pointed out that irrespective of the fact that the Arabic language is

the youngest among the Semitic languages with regard to its literature, modern Arabic has retained more elements originating from the ancient Semitic mother language. Such retention includes broken plural *jamc taksīr* system, sounds *jamc sālīm* a full conjugation system and their components which existed in the ancient Semitic languages (Anis et al.1963 : 33).

3.6 The Arabic language in the pre-Islamic era

Jāhiliyyah is the term used in the Qura'n (the Muslim's Holy Book) to refer to the century immediately before Islam and it denotes the period in which Arabia did not have any revealed book. It has been noted that no writing system in any developed form existed in Northern Arabia in the pre-Islamic period, therefore no reliable or detailed record of events has been left for researchers and specialists before the emergence of Islam. The only sources for that period are confined to legends, traditions, proverbs, stories of wars and heroism, and most important of all poems. These were all transmitted verbally until they were written and recorded in the second and third centuries after *Hijrah* (sixth century A.D) (Hitti 1970 : 86). During that period of time, poetry played an important linguistic role. It helped to provide models of the traditionally accepted use of words, rhythms and metaphors. The Arabs used to hold fairs *Suq* where prizes were granted to poets with the most articulate and well composed poems. An articulate speaker is clear, eloquent and skilful in using the correct literary language (Wehr 1976 : 714). This emphasis on articulate speech *fusha* and correct use of words as well as expression became more important after the advent of Islam when the correct pronunciation and use of the language appeared to be in danger due to the large number of non-Arabic speakers who embraced Islam and needed to learn Arabic to perform religious rituals (Ibn Khaldon 1958 :346). At these fairs *Āswāq* the poets and

speakers had to avoid the localised language of any particular dialect and use only the standard language which was known and understood throughout the Arabian Peninsula . This, in turn, prepared the scene for the emergence of a unified dialect which did not have the localised characteristics of one particular dialect. This kind of language was mastered only by competent speakers. The Holy Qura'n was revealed in this language.

3.7 The impact of Islam on the Arabic language

The advent of Islam and the revelation of the Holy Qura'n in Arabic had a great impact on the Arabic language. Islam has changed the status of this language from a tribal to an urban and international language. The Qura'n which contains the message of Islam revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by Archangel Gabriel, is considered to be the most reliable document as far as the Arabic language is concerned. This revelation made the Arabs aware of the need for their native tongue to become stronger and the importance of the Arabic language was enhanced. They considered the choice of Arabic to be the language of the Qura'n as a holy honour. Being the language of the Divine Revelation, Arabic and religion were practically inseparable. Therefore, Arabs and non-Arabs alike set about preserving the language for the sake of the Qura'n or preserving the Qu'ran for the sake of language. However, this honour presented Arabs with certain problems and new challenges (Chejne 1969 : 38)

Because the Arabic language is highly inflectional and all case endings *icrab* must be strictly observed, the Qura'n, considered by Muslims as the word of God (Allah), has to be recited with accurate case endings, otherwise the meanings of the verses may be misunderstood. This was realised by the Prophet Muhammad and he undertook the task of training some of his companions who were then called

"reciters" and "memorisers". However, this worry over accurately reciting the Qura'n was not serious at that time because of the presence of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was most knowledgeable and to whom problems and disputes could readily be referred.

Soon after the death of Prophet Muhammad, his companions were involved in several battles, the most important of which was the Apostasy Battle where many of Prophet Muhammad's companions were killed including those who were trained to read the Qura'n (the reciters and the memorizers). It was feared that the Qura'n would be in danger if more memorizers and reciters were killed in other battles leading to the mispronunciation and misreading of the Qura'n. As mentioned earlier, the Arabic language is linked with the Qura'n, therefore anything which may endanger the Qura'n will automatically endanger the Arabic language. Ibn Khaldon (1967) reports that in order to preserve the Qura'n from such danger, Abu Al-Aswad was instructed by one of the Caliph's governors to compose some rules which might serve as a guide to the public and enable them to understand the Holy Qura'n. He asked to be excused from this task but later he decided to accept it when he heard a man reciting the following passage from the Qura'n

And an announcement from Allah and His Messenger
dissolves (treaty) obligations with the pagans (Qura'n Surat Al-
Tauba, verse 9).

The reader pronounced *rasūlihī* (His messenger) instead of the correct one *rasulah* which would make one think that Allah dissolves (treaty) obligation with His Messenger as well - which, for sure, was not meant.

Abu Al-Aswad reacted angrily : "I would have never thought that things

would have deteriorated to such a serious extent". He then pointed to a scribe and said: "When you see me open my mouth *fathah* in pronouncing the letter, place a point over it; when I close my mouth *dammah*, place a point before or upon the letter; and when I pucker up my mouth *kasrah*, place a point under the letter". (Ibn Khaldon 1967 : 120)

3.8 The establishment of Arabic grammar

Prior to Islam, the Arabic language was the language of tribes scattered in the desert. However, things changed dramatically after the expansion of Islam beyond the Arabian Peninsula and the establishment of the Islamic State *Khilāfa* which later included neighbouring States whose national languages were not Arabic, such as Syria, Iraq and Iran (Persia). Such an expansion resulted in Arabic being spoken far away from its original homeland and this brought about new dangers and challenges.

One of these challenges came from the new converts who embraced Islam and who were very enthusiastic about learning the Arabic language as a medium for reciting the Holy Qura'n and the performance of certain religious duties. Early Arab Muslims experienced difficulty in instructing new Muslims in the teachings of Islam without teaching them Arabic, a problem which they had not encountered before. The embracing of Islam is such a simple procedure that it only needs the utterance of one sentence *Shahādah*. This was the case at that time, too. It was, however, a much more difficult task to teach the Arabic language to the new converts. Owing to the enormous number of non-Arabs who converted to Islam and who were so enthusiastic to learn Arabic, faulty speech *alahn* was very common in the new areas which were far away from the original base of the language. Naturally these phenomena of mispronunciation

and erroneous speech also affected, though not greatly, native Arabic speakers. Chejne (1969) pointed out that:

A natural consequence of the intermingling of Arabs and non-Arabs was what early Muslim scholars refer to as a corruption or deterioration of the language manifested in foreign accents, mispronunciation of words, poor enunciation, shifting of vowels and consonants, misuse of certain expressions, and other peculiarities. (p. 39)

As evidence of the concern for the faulty speech which had begun to prevail amongst the Arabs, Omar, the second Caliph of the Islamic State took a strong action against one of his officials by withholding his salary for the whole year because he had made a linguistic error when he wrote a letter to the Caliph (Al-Lughawi 1974: 5).

The Second challenge which the Arabic language faced after the spread of Islam was the transfer of different Arabic dialects into new regions outside the Arabian peninsula, which contributed to more linguistic confusion. The dialect of the Quraish tribe, the tribe of Prophet Muhammad, was confronted with such a situation for the first time in the history of Arabia (Anis 1972 :202). Nicholson (1953 : 342) described the situation as follows:

if the pride and the delight of the Arabs in their noble language led them to regard the maintenance of its purity as a nation duty, they were generally bound by their religious conviction to take measures for insuring the correct pronunciation and that miracle of Divine Eloquence the Arabic Qura'n.

In his famous book *Almuqadimah* (The Introduction), Ibn Khaldon mentions an incident that features in all books and research publications that discuss the start of the codification of Arabic grammar.

Abul Al-Aswad was eminent among the *Tābicīn*, an inhabitant of Basra and a partisan of Ali Ibn Abi Talib. He was the first to invent grammar. It is said that (the Caliph) Ali laid down for him this principle: the parts of speech are three - the noun, the verb and the particles - and told him to write a complete treatise. Others say that he was the instructor to the children of Ziad ibn Abih, who was then the Governor of Arabian and Persian Iraq and that he went to him one day and said “ Emir, May God direct you! I realise that Arabs have become mingled with these non-Arab nations and that their tongue is altered so that they speak incorrectly. Will you then authorise me to compose for the Arabs something which may enable them to know their language?” (Ibn Khaldon, 1958 : 322).

Another incident which indicates the prevalence of faulty speech *allahn* happened to the daughter of the one who contributed to establishing the Arabic grammar: As Abu Al-Aswad entered his house on a certain day, one of his daughters said to him: “ *Mā aḥṣanu Al-Samā’i*” (?) “What is most beautiful in the sky?” To which he answered : “The stars,” but she replied “Dad, I don’t mean to say what is the most beautiful object in it, I was only expressing my admiration at its beauty.” “You must then say”, he observed, “*Ma aḥsana al-Samā’a*” (how beautiful is the sky!) In this incident her father explains to her that she had mistakenly used the wrong case ending (*u*) instead of (*a*) which made the utterance interrogative rather than explanatory. He then invented the grammar.

Although there is a degree of obscurity as to who established the grammar and how there is a consistent view that the Caliph Ali and Abu Al-Aswad were the earliest who can take the credit for codifying Arabic grammar.

It was in the seventh century A.D. that early Muslim scholars began to codify the Arabic grammar. They confined themselves to a technique which they believed efficient and reliable. There are five main sources from which they derived the grammatical rules. First, the Qura'n, considered to be the purest and most eloquently written form in Arabic; second, the sayings, correspondence and speeches of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) whom Muslims consider as the best of those who spoke Arabic; third, the speech of the desert specifically in the city of Makkah and its surroundings. The Arab linguists regard the people of these areas as the standard-bearers of purism and eloquence (Chejne 1969 :40). Besides the Quraish dialect (the tribe of Prophet Muhammad), there are six other dialects considered to be important sources as they represent the purest, most articulate and eloquent Arabic: Tamim, Hudhayl, Asad, Tayy and Kinanah. The fourth source is poetry, prose and proverbs before Islam and from the early Islamic period.

The early scholars, then, collected samples from Arab speech in the desert which was analysed and classified. As the Qura'n was the main source, they matched their sample with the Qura'n as a final process before setting up the rules. However it is important to note that these scholars were not linguists as the term is used nowadays. Rather, they were motivated only by their sincere devotion to and enthusiasm for Islam and the language of the Qura'n.

3.9 The influence of other languages

As mentioned earlier, non-Arabs who embraced Islam were well aware of the challenges that confronted the Arabic language, and they contributed to the struggle

against incorrect usage. It is interesting to note that some of these non-Arabs had spoken languages which had already been codified and had grammatical rules of their own. This encouraged the early Arab scholars to adopt similar models. In his book on The Origins of Languages and Grammar (1969 : 106) Tarazi argues that the Indian language and its speakers in particular have influenced the Arabs to codify their language. This opinion is questionable because the Indian language, Sanskrit, is not a Semitic language. However, there might be an Indian description or Arabic description rather than adopting the existing model of grammar. It is believed, according to Fraiha (1973 : 75) that the ancient Syriac language had some influence on the Arabic language. Arabs were in close contact with the Syrians when they settled in Syria and Iraq and Syriac was documented and codified before the Arabs codified their own language. In fact , the first pioneers who took the credit and contributed considerably to preserving the language of the Qura'n were originally non-Arabs. Abul-Aswad Al-Duali for instance was one of the most devout and zealous figures in the seventh century A.D.. Another example , the famous grammarian, Al-Khalil bin Ahmad, who contributed to developing and working on the documentation of the grammar was not an Arab. Yahya Ibn Yamur who helped in classifying and writing many parts of the grammar was Persian (Tarazi 1969 : 108). Though the early Arabs had strong devotion to preserving the language of the Qura'n and thought that it was in danger due to the expansion of Islam into the neighbouring areas, Arabic grammar could not have been documented and codified without the great contribution of non-Arabs who embraced Islam, as well as their descendants.

3.10 Status of Arabic grammar after 700 A.D.

The status of Arabic grammar increased during the following Islamic Caliphate, the Umayyads, who ruled from 661 till 750 A.D. (thirty years after the death of Prophet Muhammad). Evidence of the Caliph's concern for the Arabic language is the fact that a knowledge of Arabic grammar was considered one of the criteria for succession to office.

It was reported that Abd al-Malik, one of the Umayyad Caliphs, was reluctant to appoint one of his favourite sons to succeed him because of his incorrect speech and ignorance of Arabic grammar (Nicholson 1953 : 203). Despite the fact that there is not sufficient information about the actual situation of Arabic grammar, it can be inferred that the foundation of grammatical studies was laid under the Umayyad dynasty. They took the credit for initiating Arabization as a matter of State policy and introducing the change from Greek to Arabic in Syria and Egypt. The Arabic language was simplified by, for example, adding dots to Arabic letters to differentiate identical letters and providing a vowel notation to ensure correct reading (Chejne 1969 : 63-64). There is no doubt that the Umayyad's accomplishment was significant and it was the basis upon which the Abbasids, their successors, made further developments.

The coming of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750 A.D. is considered as the beginning of the golden era and was the starting point of the so-called socio-intellectual revolution which affected the Arabic language, in general, and the grammar in particular. The Arabic language in this period Chejne added:

...offered not only a rich vocabulary but also the qualities of simplicity, clarity, precision and the capacity for expressing abstractions in any field of knowledge: history, law, Koranic studies

literature, philosophy, mathematics, medicine, astronomy and theology (ibid: 66).

One of the major developments which affected the Arabic language during the Abbasid dynasty was the translation of many works into Arabic. This played a major role in enriching the language, developing it and its technical terminology. The Arabic language became more flexible and more precise when expressing different thoughts.

There is no doubt that the Abbasids take the credit for establishing the first higher education institution in history. The first university was named the House of Wisdom and was established at the beginning of the ninth century A.D. Another higher educational centre "Al-Azhar" was established in Cairo and still plays an important role especially in Islamic studies. The University of Cordova in Spain, during the tenth century was the most important educational institute in the world. It was reported that thousands of students were taught different subjects such as Arabic, history, Qura'n, philosophy and theology. The most learned scholars were recruited to teach there. In this great educational atmosphere, the Arabic language in general and Arabic grammar in particular prospered and became the focus of study for many linguists.

One of the famous grammarians was Sibawaih, a non-Arab of Persian origin who died in 793 A.D. His book 'Al-Kitāb' was the first complete Arabic grammar and is still an important reference book up to the present time (Bakallah 1981: 22) Another Muslim scholar who contributed a great deal to grammatical studies was Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad (died 786) who was one of those who originated the formalised Arabic grammar. Bakallah (1981) stated that:

The debate on linguistic issues might have contributed to the establishment of various schools of Arabic grammar, though

differing in the details and methodology, rather than the basic, fundamental issues. Sibawaih and his mentor Al-Khalil were the leaders of the Basrite School of grammar whereas Al-Kisei led the Kufite school. (p. 23)

During the Abassid era, Arabic grammar flourished and was completely codified and formalised. All subsequent work done on Arabic grammatical studies owes a great debt to the work done during the Abbasid's Caliphate.

3.11 The origins of grammatical errors

It is difficult to pin down the origins of errors or *alahn*, ungrammatical speech, in Arabic. From one point of view there have been errors in speech for as long as there have been speakers as it is human nature to make mistakes. Indeed, if it were not for the errors, we would not have a clear idea of correct form. However, it is possible to document the growth and spread of this phenomenon.

Likdeem (1988: 35) mentioned in his research that Al-Sayadi has stated that Arabic passed through several stages in the pre-Islamic era. He dates the establishment of proper linguistic usage to the middle of the seventh century when the rules of grammar were formulated. I have already discussed early in this chapter the grammatical rules in the context of the fears of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad that the Language of the Holy Koran would be lost.

Ibn Khaldon refers to an important factor that has contributed to the spread of linguistic errors. He wrote:

the *fusha* of the Mudar tribe was corrupted when they came into contact with non-Arabs. The younger generation became used to hearing meanings expressed in ways different

from the speech of their elders and they began to follow these new modes of expression when talking to non-Arabs. These new ways were not as good as the original and the language became debased (Ibn Khaldon. 1958 :343).

The fact that the younger generation used these new modes of expression to communicate with non-Arabs suggests that this was necessary to make themselves understood and that the older style of Arabic was losing its power as a tool of communication. Certainly, the mixing of Arabs and non-Arabs has greatly influenced the linguistic habits of the Arabs.

Ungrammatical speech was not confined to the common people. It was also apparent among the cultured. Al-Hariry, a well-known linguist, has commented that his generation, despite their great attention to sound expression, did not express themselves well because of the lack of linguistic sense and an appreciation of a proper Arabic aesthetic. They were comfortable with *'icrāb*, because they are cut off from the true Arabic. However, it is erroneous to believe that the common speech of the public is all ungrammatical and that what is not common or frequently used is correct, a point of view put forward by Al-Zubaidy (1981:38)

Shaker Qinawi has delineated three views among scholars concerning the appearance and spread of *alahn*. The first group believes that the Arabs spoke correctly by instinct and were not worried by solecisms until Islam spread into non-Arabic speaking countries. The second group believes that it was probable that *alahn* existed in the pre-Islamic period. Among these writers are Ibn Jinny who has a chapter in one of his books entitled "*Faṣl fī akhta' alcarab*", and Abdel Aziz Matar, who is quoted by Qinawi as saying " *alahn* in Arabic appeared in case endings first among Arabs while among slaves it was found in the pronunciation of phonemes that did not have

equivalents in their own language.” The third group believes that an Arab never makes errors and that what have been cited as errors are no more than dialectical variations in use during the age of eloquence. (Qinawi, 1990: 22 ff).

The claim that an Arab never makes mistakes is refutable as the incidents which show the occurrence of errors among Arabs in the past are recorded in grammar books. From these it is clear that *alahn* did exist but that it was not so widespread as it is now.

My conclusion is that grammatical errors have existed throughout the history of Arabic. They spread gradually with the expansion of the Islamic empire and the consequent mixing of Arabs and non-Arabs. After the period of eloquence *faṣaḥa* three changes occurred in Arabic. The first was brought about by derivation *’ishtiḳāq* and metaphor *majāz*, the second by borrowing from non-Arab nations and the third was the replacement of case endings *’icrāb* with word positions and phonemes.

The reports of historians show that colloquial Arabic was in the ascendant during the reign of Haroun Al-Rasheed and that it was even used in literary writings. Style also had undergone change and was no longer that used in old Arabic. Furthermore, rhetoric, with its difficult Bedouin words, was no longer needed. Men of letters started avoiding the classification of words and the difficult-to-understand styles of expression that were common in the Bedouin language.

Solecism was not only confined to cultured poets but affected eminent writers, Koran readers, men of letters and even grammarians themselves.

Such mistakes are even common among specialists of jurisprudence *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* because of a neglect of grammar. Some specialists have said that worrying about grammar is a nonsense, if not a waste of time. Their main concern, they argue, is *ḥadīth* and Jurisprudence; avoiding grammatical errors is a secondary consideration.

3.12 Movement of errors correction

From the start the linguistic correction movement represented a reaction to linguistic solecism and the prevalence of errors which had spread into phonemes, grammar, morphology and even into the semantics of the language. The movement developed in tandem with the development of grammar and many books were written in these two fields; which have become classic texts. The linguistic correction movement traced deviations from the rules of Arabic, noted solecisms and other errors and set out the necessary corrections. The aim was not primarily educational but rather was motivated by a wish to provide a scientific approach which would help preserve the language for generations to come. (Hamadi 1980 : 15). 'The correction movement had a number of key characteristics:

1. It fostered a return to the classic texts and paid great attention to what had been written about solecism. This was not only done partly so that correct words and patterns could be identified, but also so that the methods employed in these studies could be understood and applied again in an attempt to analyse some of the features of contemporary linguistic development.

2. Attention was paid to the vocabulary of the Holy Qura'n which is an important source for testing the correctness of words. It represents the zenith of eloquence in Arabic.

3. The movement started to quote the *ḥadīth* as an authority. Linguists differ about this because it is sometimes difficult to interpret the meaning of *ḥadīth* and it has a large number of foreign narrators. However, the Arabic Academy in Cairo has suggested that it may be possible to quote *ḥadīth* under certain conditions (Arabic Language Assembly 1983 : 5).

4. Attention was paid to the Kufa School of Grammar which has been discussed earlier in this chapter. The writings of this school had been neglected, but now, much of the incorrect vocabulary and many of the wrong usages of the Basra School were corrected by reference to Kufa by such writers as Mustafa Gawad and Yaqoob. This revived interest in Kufa also influenced the educational and linguistic resolutions of the Arabic Language Assembly (Arabic Language Assembly 1983 : 7ff).

5. The adoption of analogy was passed as law in the Arabic Language Assembly. (Arabic Language Assembly 1984 : 8)

6. The creation of language assemblies began. These were bodies authorised to issue decisions on the correctness or otherwise of particular linguistic usages.
7. Renewed study was directed at common terms and expressions to ascertain whether or not they were linguistically acceptable.
8. The movement also challenged defective language studies by detailing the richness and growth of Arabic. This gave the lie to those commentators who had argued that Arabic could not cope with change and development and should be abandoned because of its complexity and difficulty.
9. Greater attention was paid to current styles of language study, in particular, the modern technique of error analysis.

3.12.1 A critical view of the correction movement

The correction movement clearly brought many benefits, but like any human enterprise, it had its share of shortcomings. For example, the number of mistakes the founders of the movement claim to have found is surprisingly large. Their judgements have occasionally been rash. Yaqoob states that those who judged adopted a no-hearing rule. This criterion is by no means foolproof as it requires that one should have almost complete knowledge of spoken Arabic as it was during its golden age (Yaqoob 1986 : 35). Undoubtedly, a too rigid application of this rule may damage the language, even though the intent of the movement was to preserve its eloquence.

The correction movement has also been criticised for the rigidity and rejection of language development. These resulted from the decision to confine the research for correct linguistic forms within certain temporal and spatial boundaries. Some members of the movement reject analogy and claim that no one is entitled to innovate because daring to do so risks spoiling the language. In my opinion the language is spoilt by precisely this rigidity.

Some linguists of the correct movement quote uncritically each others' writings. Yaqoob (1986 :40) reported that Abu Al-Abbas has stated that the words *sanah* and *cām* do not have the same meaning. Al-Yazgy Asa'ad Dhagher, Abbas Abu-El-Soaad and others, who were his disciples, have all accepted this opinion. The Holy Qura'n, however, does not differentiate between the two words, as the following verse shows: "We once sent Noah to his people, and he tarried among them a thousand years (*sanah*) less fifty years (*cām*)" (Qura'n 1985, Surat of Ankaboot verse 14). In this verse both *sanah* and *cām* are used with the meaning of 'year'.

Verbal battles were waged by some linguists. These fights were characterised by petty wrangles and did not live up to the best standards of objective debate.

In contrast to some of the conservative members of the movement, others were over-tolerant and rushed into accepting wrong usages. They then began a desperate search to find old quotations to back their erroneous judgements. The Egyptian Assembly, for example, has been accused of over-tolerance to the point where it embarrassed its own members. At one meeting they discussed a common, but grammatically incorrect, expression. It was admitted that there was no explicit passage in grammar books permitting the use of this style, but, nonetheless, the Assembly

passed a resolution permitting its use because it was felt to be impossible to replace it with another correct construction. By following this weakly-grounded justification, the Assembly permitted what linguists agreed to prohibit and thus laid itself open to criticism.

Undoubtedly, the Arabic Language Assembly in Cairo has helped clarify what is correct in many usages previously thought to be incorrect. It has also adapted to change and development and allowed the usage of modern terms. However, it has also permitted some phrasings that explicitly contradict the classical rule, for example, by allowing the omission of “*ʾan*” in some contemporary styles like *yurīd yshrab*, He wants to drink. They support their decision by reference to that fact that this has become common and generally accepted. (Arabic Language Assembly 1975 : 158,182).

3.13 The concept and criterion of incorrectness

3.13.1 The period before grammatical rules were codified

Before the age of codification, the Arabs did not have rules to refer to. They were however probably intuitively aware of the existence of linguistic laws moulding their language whether these were phonetic *ṣawt*, derivative *ʾishtiḳāq*, structural *tarkīb* or connotative *dilālah*. They also differentiated between the dialect spoken by any Arab tribe and the standard language spoken by all Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula. Poets would rigorously examine the language of their poems to make sure it was correct. This process could take so long that composition could take a year. The poems were consequently called annals *ḥawliyāt*. Such fastidiousness clearly demonstrates the care devoted to achieving linguistic correctness during this period. This is all the more

remarkable when it is considered that poetry, proverbs and aphorisms at that time were, to a degree, the equivalent of the output of the mass media in our current age

Another indication of the importance and existence of the standard language is poetry fairs where poets used to compete. Shaheen (1984:232) writes that

authors and poets of different tribal lands used to adhere to the grammatical rules of common classical Arabic and never deviated from them. If the participant began to deviate from the rules, critics of the poetry would correct him either by individual direction or by communal sanctions used against those who rebelled against the traditions of classical Arabic.

3.13.2 After codification

During this early period, the theory of linguistic incorrectness was linked to grammatical and morphological rules. Grammarians set up criteria by which to judge any linguistic usage. From these they derived the following rules:

1. Specification of the area of eloquence *faṣāḥah*
2. Specification of the age of eloquence
3. Linguistic intuition *salīqah*
4. Reliable quotation

The area of eloquence (previously referred to in this Chapter 3) refers to the fact that the linguists confined the area of correct usage to six Bedouin tribes. They did not accept the language of adjacent Arab tribes, non-Arabs or town dwellers as a standard because those people mixed with slaves, merchants and others and their language had become corrupt. Certainly, this criterion is restrictive and shows how small the area used by the linguists to develop their grammatical analysis was. The Bedouin tribes

were, however, not alone in acquiring the eloquency as some urban citizens of the period used to send their children to the Bedouin so that they might acquire a sound grasp of classical Arabic.

The age of eloquence was defined by linguists as lasting until the later years of the ninth century AD for the Bedouins and the middle of the eighth century for urban dwellers. This was the maximum period allowed for the choice of authoritative literary texts. After this period, grammarians feared that the language of the Bedouin, which was the standard, had been to greatly influenced by the language of the cities, the expansion of Islam and the mingling of Arabs and non-Arabs.

Some linguists have criticised this criterion and believe that it has frozen grammatical rules and turned an interest in real linguistic problems into abstraction (*tajrīd*) and philosophising. This criterion could not accommodate the reality of an ever-developing language.

The third criterion, intuition *salīqah* is related to the first two inasmuch as total eloquence and correct case endings *'icrāb* would only be achieved by an Arab, in particular by a Bedouin, who instinctively speaks eloquently and correctly and, indeed, would not understand if he heard solecisms. Undoubtedly, this criterion is very precisely based, as it is, on the linguistic habits of one group of Arabs. It is suspicious of learnt eloquence which cannot prevent unconscious errors. Only the Bedouin has this innate gift inherited from his tribal ancestors and for this reason his language is beyond criticism and is the source of the rules against which other modes of expression should be judged (Eid. 1968:40).

The fourth criterion is not so much concerned with the correctness of language itself as with the procedures adopted by those who have written about the texts. Grammarians have discovered errors in texts which were supposed to be error-free. However, when the grammarians started investigating about the reporters of the texts, they found that few of these reporters were not reliable and consequently they rejected the texts themselves. Before implementing this method, some grammarians tend to justify the errors found in those texts. (ibid: 29).

There is a group of linguists, among them the Kufa School, who do not accept all these criteria. They argue that the specification of the age of eloquence adhered to by the Basra School does an injustice to Arab dialects because one tribe's dialect should not be favoured against all the others and that what one tribe believes to be incorrect may be correct for another. The Kufa School also rejects some of the Basra School's ideas about irregularity *shuthūth* arguing that they are based on an incomplete survey. Had the survey been wider, they argue, many more so-called irregularities would have been found. For this reason, the Kufa School allows analogies to be made to both the regular and the irregular.

3.13.3 First half of the twentieth century

During this period, linguists followed different criteria from those of their ancestors and were divided into two groups. The first was conservative and the second moderate. Hamadi (1980) mentioned that the conservatives, including Ibrahim Al-Yazgy (1906), Asa'ad Dagher (1925), Kamal Ibrahim and Ibrahim Monzer (1950) and others based their linguistic ideas on the following criteria. First, common terms and expressions found in the language of the ancient Arabs. Second, the extreme application

of analogy: what contradicts analogy is incorrect and what agrees with it is correct. This criterion is applied to all texts whether from contemporaries or ancestors. Thus they reject the plural of *manāra* minaret as *mana'ir* because this type of analogy is not found in the old Arab texts. Mohammed Hamadi has criticised this method because:

it rejects Arab texts, both prose and poetry, and describes them as incorrect only because they deviate from the rules which grammarians have in the first place deduced from them (Hamadi, 1980 :200).

Third, rejection of words not found in Arabic lexicons. In my view such lexicons are not perfect. Linguists have shown that many words known to have been used by Arabs are not included in them. Fourth, reliance on the judgements of the ancestors regarding incorrectness. Some linguists have just relied on the opinions of earlier scholars without making any effort to test these opinions. Fifth, reliance on the most eloquent. This entails a distinction between the eloquent and the most eloquent. Yaqoob has stated that:

In our criticisms we follow the most eloquent of Arabic accents and writers' style only. We will, however, ignore any opinion or old text that allows a word or term we have criticised (Yaqoob 1986 :21)

Hamadi (1980) reported that the moderate group includes Mostafa Al-Ghalaieiny, Mostafa Gawad, Mostafa Sadeq and Mohammed Ali Al-Naggar. They all believe that:

whatever has been used in Arabic discourse is correct and that no one is entitled to refute, omit or negate anything uttered by the old Arabs. The generations after the Age of Eloquence have imitated these utterances and have copied what has been quoted (Hamadi . 1980: 214).

The first criteria of the moderate linguists is based on accepting all Arab dialects; they believe that they are all correct. They also believe that the Arab tongue is very rich

and that what is normally quoted from the past is a tiny proportion of what has actually been uttered.

The second criteria is to abide by the limits of *samāc* (hearing) and *qiyās* (analogy). Thus, although this group believes in simplification, they confine it to what has been heard and accept analogies. For them, hearing is only what has been heard from the ancestors and analogies are confined to those made by the ancestors. The criterion of hearing is limited to the Age of Eloquence.

Dissatisfaction with lexicons is the third criteria set by moderate linguists who believe that old lexicons overlooked many acceptable Arabic words, either on purpose or inadvertently. The fact that something does not appear in a lexicon does not mean that it is necessarily incorrect. Many words not included in these old lexicons were actually used by the ancient Arabs and they have been included in later compilations. Moderate linguists always, therefore, refer to the classic books of literature and poetry to decide whether or not a word or expression is acceptable.

The fourth criteria is the acknowledgement of different aspects of eloquence. This group did not adhere to the most eloquent as against the eloquent in their judgements. On many occasions they quote all the relevant phrases used by the ancient Arabs, express a preference for the more eloquent but do not reject out of hand the less eloquent.

In summary, at the beginning of this century linguists were divided into two groups based on the Basra and Kufa Schools. One group, the conservatives, insisted on

analogy and regularity, the other, the moderates, supported analogy *qiyās* and hearing *samāc*.

3.13.4 The second half of the twentieth century

The contemporary concept of linguistic error is related to the appearance, since the late fifties, of new linguistic theories which link language and society. It has also been influenced by the view that the modification of language is an inevitable process. Stephen Olmann states that language:

is not stable at all, though its development may sometimes seem slow. Phonemes, constructions, grammatical elements, wordings and word meanings are all subject to change and development. But only the speed of change and development differ from one period of time to another, and from one sector of language to another (Quoted by Likdeem 1988 : 64).

Following from this we find that the linguists' criteria of correctness and incorrectness now rely primarily on the social understanding of language. One of these linguists has written: "linguistic correctness is closely related to the form of language that society accepts. Grammatical error, on the other hand is left to the society to reject, because society possesses and controls the language and not vice versa" (Shaheen, 1984:231).

Mohammed Eid (1968) argues that acknowledging the development of language is an acknowledgement of the flexibility of the criteria of correctness and their change from one generation to another. The language user should then accept as correct the criteria he acquires from his own generation. (ibid p.405)

These linguists believe that grammatical rules are subject to a process of development. Some have gone so far as to argue that, because of this, contemporary language cannot be judged against the prescriptions of old grammatical rules. They believe that these rules relate only to the language of the fourteenth century. This belief has resulted in the call for the abolition of case endings *'icrāb*. Some linguists have even advocated the replacement of classical Arabic with slang in literary writing (see Chapter Five).

3.14 A critical review

Abdellah Likdeem believed that sticking to the old grammatical rules fails to accommodate the nature of language which naturally develops according to the development of needs and the expansion of linguistic contacts. Limiting the criteria for linguistic analysis to the Age of Eloquence will, in time, make the Arabic language sound strange in an ever-developing Arab society (Likdeem, 1988: 66).

I largely agree with Likdeem's opinion. However, it is not legitimate to apply what he has to say about language in general to the rules of language themselves. To do so would demolish the very pillars upon which language stands. While we must not take a conservative position in relation to the adoption of modern teaching methods and theories, in which the West has excelled, we must retain the framework provided by the rules of language. For these rules are the right, and indeed only, criteria for judging the correctness or incorrectness of the language used by students.

In his discussion of the criterion of correctness, Abdellah Likdeem has urged the necessity of accepting foreign words into Arabic, principally on the grounds that these

words can have meanings that do not exist in the national language (ibid. 66) He has also argued that if someone attempted to translate a foreign text into Arabic without introducing foreign words, he would have to make analogies or derivations that may contradict the commonly accepted rules. In my opinion this argument could have a deleterious effect on Arabic, for, if we open the door widely to foreign words, the language would undoubtedly gradually perish and what has been written hundreds of years ago would become incomprehensible. Apart from that, if someone is unable to translate because of his ignorance, this does not entitle him to start using foreign words. The huge efforts made in this area by the Arabic Language Assemblies are sufficient to solve these types of problem and to arrive at a suitable translation.

Some contemporary Arab linguists think that the correct criteria should rely primarily on social convention. This view may be the result of following theories of the development of European languages and it is flawed, I believe, because the difference between the conversational and written languages in Arabic is much greater than in the well-known European languages. Only if the distinction between slang and classical Arabic is abandoned will European theories of language development be applicable to Arabic.

Yaqoob has also criticised some linguists' criteria of correctness and incorrectness. His main contentions are that they commit the same mistakes as they condemn. Besides, they are inconsistent in their use of criteria and rely on well-known philological lexicons in their judgement, but, at the same time, attribute mistakes to them. These linguists are intolerant in their judgements and much of what they have claimed to be incorrect has been shown to be correct. They also quote without care, or sufficient verification of sources (Yaqoob 1986 : 55-62).

3.15 Attitude towards errors

There are two schools of thought for dealing with learners' errors. The first school is that of the Behaviourists. They believe in suppressing the making of errors, because errors are considered an evidence of bad teaching: "Language behaviour is created most efficiently by exercises in which correct responses by the students are elicited and reinforced" (Joyce and Alleman 1979: 109).

Therefore according to a Behaviourist, if errors occur, it is a sign of inadequacy of the teaching techniques. Thus, stress is laid on the manipulative practice of language in a rather mechanical fashion. In order to avoid making errors, students should be exposed to correct models and are expected to imitate good models too.

The second school is that of the Mentalists who are more humanistic. This school is represented by cognitive psychology and transformational generative grammar. It views the making of errors as a healthy evidence of learning. Also, it maintains that as long as our life is imperfect, errors may occur in spite of the teacher's best efforts (Corder 1967 :162). Corder further stated that:

We can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn; it is a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning (1967 :162 ff).

In the view of Mentalists, errors are a normal and necessary part of the learning process. They are expected to be helpful to learners as well as to teachers. With the help of errors, teachers can know how far the student has progressed in learning and can

determine which areas in the learner's English need more attention and what type of attention (Richards 1980: 207).

3.16 Concluding remarks

It seems that the best way of beginning to talk about the grammatical errors in students' writing is to begin by understanding the process of growth of the error, from the time when the principles of Arabic grammar were first laid down. So it is very important to shed light on the birth of the Arabic language before Islam, its development after Islam, and the extent to which other languages have influenced Arabic.

In this chapter, a definition has also been given of the concept of error and the criterion of perfection has been explained. People's perception of the language and their different attitudes towards errors have also been discussed, with an attempt to suggest correct ideas and opinions.

In spite of the deeply rooted nature of the Arabic language and the logic of its grammar, and also in spite of Arabic being regarded as the language of holiness because it is the language of the Koran, the holy book, and the language of Mohammed, there is still a complaint about the prevalence of grammatical errors. The next chapter will discuss this complaint and its root.

Chapter Four

Prevalence of Grammatical Errors: Causes and Complaints

Chapter Four

Prevalence of Grammatical Errors: Causes and Complaints

4.1 Preface

Having gained their independence, Arab countries have demonstrated a great interest in the Arabic language and its branches. Language is associated with the life of a nation and any country that has forsaken its tongue has separated itself from its past, its traditions and its history. Arab countries have, therefore, made Arabic the language of instruction for all academic subjects at all stages; they have made Arabic the main subject in the syllabus and have made success in Arabic a basic condition for passing from one grade to another.

A great share of the total marks is devoted to Arabic. In the primary stage Arabic represents 22-40% of the total marks in 12 Arab countries; in the intermediate stage, it represents 18-30% in 10 countries and, more importantly, it is considered one of the foundations upon which the success of students in examinations is based in both these stages in twelve countries (ALESCO 1974: 263).

The Arab League, in the session held on 22.2.1948, recommended that Arab governments should give Arabic as much teaching time as possible in syllabuses (Union of Arabic Language Assemblies, 1977 : 31).

Despite the great care and interest the Arabs demonstrate for Arabic as the tongue of the Koran, there were and still are complaints about the low standard of students in Arabic. This chapter discusses complaints about the weakness of students in the Arabic language, particularly grammar, and the resulting prevalence of grammatical error. The sources of this weakness will also be examined.

4.2 A crisis in the teaching of the Arabic language

Many linguists, educationalists and even general writers have noted the crisis in the teaching of the Arabic language. For example, Taha Husain (1933:7) writes

it is not Arabic taught in our schools, but rather something strange that is neither related to life nor to the student's mind, sensibility and sentiment.

Teaching Arabic as it is done nowadays has led to a weakening of the students' ability to express themselves clearly. A comparison between what an eight-year French child reads of the great texts written by eminent men of letters in his tongue in his school books and the reading of his Arab counterpart shows that instruction in Arabic is inadequate and emphasises the need for a study of and a solution to the problem as quickly as possible. (Al-Qalmawi, 1959: 18)

In her well-known book, *Lugatunā Wa alḥayāh* (Our Language and Life), Dr. Aishah Abdulrahman has shown that an indication of the linguistic crisis is that the more progress the student makes, the more ignorant and reluctant he becomes. Then, after long years of study, the student graduates, but is unable to write a simple letter in his own tongue (Abdulrahman A 1969: 196). Qazzaz 1980) noted in Al-Madina newspaper No 5060 that:

The student graduates from university as an illiterate or semi-

literate, and this is a big loss given the large sums of money spent by the country in the field of education. The reason behind this is the accumulation of over large syllabuses which cram the student's mind but do not foster concentration or understanding. This leads to the dispersion of his mind in a jungle of sciences whether needed or otherwise.

Mahmoud Al-Sayed has said that there is a national linguistic negligence in different aspects of language in schools, institutions, universities and the like. Classical Arabic is practised neither by teachers nor students (Al-Sayed 1987:16).

Many parents have complained that teachers should hold a big part of the responsibility. Amin Al-Kholi has said that teachers of different subjects do not master the language; they do not explain things well as educated people should, but resemble the uneducated in their explanations and writing. They are perhaps frustrated by the language and annoyed with anyone who asks for more clarification and seeks correctness of expression. They have thus been the cause behind the student's hatred of if not contempt for their Arabic language (Al-Kholi 1958: 6).

Badri 1979 discussed the problem of teaching Arabic language in the Iraqi schools which could be generalised in most of the Arabic countries. He reported that Iraqi students spend many years learning Arabic in Iraqi schools, primary, secondary and university, and yet they cannot avoid mistakes even of the most simple grammatical type; and that there are few of our university students and staff including specialists in languages who can avoid making mistakes in the language (Badri 1979 :59).

4.3 Complaints about grammar

Undoubtedly, grammar has received the lion's share of complaints. Despite the attention and time given to this subject by the syllabus planners in Arab countries, the students and cultured people who have finished studying do not show as much interest in Arabic as in scientific and other literary studies. No one would specialise in Arabic unless he is forced to do, so they study it unwillingly (Al-Sayed 1972:4).

One of those concerned with Arabic has referred to the danger of such a weakness. He has mentioned that many students cannot read a line of verse correctly. They cannot even read a single line without a linguistic error, sometimes a great many grammatical errors. The student can hardly articulate a classical Arabic word with sound pronunciation. They have gone so far in this respect that they speak Arabic as if they were speaking a foreign language (Al-Omary 1980:27).

In a report by the Educational Guidance Directorate in Saudi Arabia, it was mentioned that female youngsters use slang without realising the danger. It was reported that complaints by teachers, directors and those in charge of teaching and education are growing about the weakness of female students in using Arabic rules correctly in writing, increasing grammatical mistakes in written examinations and an increasing percentage of failures in the subject of grammar (Al-Husaini, A 1980:22).

One of the prominent linguists in Arabic (Hassan 1976:119) has stated that among native speakers of Arabic, including those at university level, many find it difficult to apprehend the rules of standard Arabic. He conducted a study which has

shown that the majority of such graduates have experienced great difficulty in correctly reading and comprehending advanced literary texts. They also find it difficult to determine the case endings of the various words.

Thus complaints about grammar are growing. Madkour (1989) says:

Grammar, the way it is composed and taught, has become a barren subject which is learnt by someone who takes it as a course for many years, but then derives no benefits from such sound pronunciation or comprehension. I know some of our *Sheyūkh* (religious scholars) who have read and taught grammar for generations; who know its development and concepts have explained it and debated about it yet cannot read a page, a poem, or deliver a speech without making grammatical errors. Such errors are not confined to contemporary *Sheyūkh* or scholars but they apply, also, to eminent grammarians. Al-Suyuti has stated in his book entitled "*bughyatu alwucāh*" that a man said to Ibn Khalawayh "I have been learning grammar for 50 years, but I cannot avoid making grammatical errors in reading. Then what is the use of grammar? if 50 years of learning have failed to teach a person to speak correctly (p :66).

The problems with Arabic grammar which have been discussed arise from the complaints of those schools where Arabic is the medium of instruction. Naturally, the situation of non-native students studying Arabic as a second language is much more difficult.

Surty (1987 : 21) complains about the difficulties which non-native Arabic students encounter when studying Arabic. He concludes that grammar was the most difficult part, especially the recognition of the various forms of nouns and verbs. Both nouns and verbs have three forms: singular, dual and plural; and two genders. masculine and feminine. This causes confusion in the minds of beginners and they tend to lose interest in learning the Arabic language.

From the statements cited earlier, it can be seen that no one doubts that a language crisis does exist, especially in Arabic grammar. One ponders upon questions such as: What is it in Arabic grammar that makes it difficult to learn and difficult to teach? What is it that makes it almost impossible to be mastered "like a god unattainable", except by a few scholars and teachers after many years of scholarly, painstaking work? What is in it which makes it unwanted by the majority of the Arab students? Why do Arab students develop this phobia against Arabic grammar during their educational career? Why has the grammar attainment level among Arab students been unsatisfactory throughout the modern history of our education? Is it the nature of Arabic grammar or the dual language situation (diglossia), or is it due to the general instructional policies and the teaching methods, or is it due to overloading the curriculum, or, perhaps to the media? Perhaps our examinations and the systems used to conduct these examinations should be held responsible for these problems?

Recent years, especially the last three decades have witnessed some attempts being made toward recognising, diagnosing and offering some clues to the causes and sources of these problems. These new efforts have shifted the focus from the linguistic and structural aspects of Arabic grammar to the educational philosophy and methods of teaching Arabic grammar as set forth by the Arab educational system throughout the Arab world. In the following pages, I will discuss the questions raised above.

4.3.1 The nature of grammar

One of the major deficiencies in Arabic grammar presentation, many Arab linguists believe, is its inherent inconsistencies. As described in chapter three, the early grammarians' primary source for accurate speech was the articulate Bedouin speech. Spanning several periods of linguistic development in their study of Arabic grammar in

order to reach one uniform system, the early grammarians did not differentiate between these periods. Rather, they combined almost three hundred years starting from about one hundred and fifty years prior to Islam and nearly the same period after the emergence of Islam. During this long period of time, it was impossible for any language to remain unchanged (Hasan, T. 1980 : 26). The lack of consistency in establishing the sources for correct speech further caused conflicting views regarding grammar. The early grammarians, while codifying the grammar, selected seven principal tribes in the desert heartland (Quraish, Tamim, Asad, Qays, Hudayl, Kinnana and Tay). The linguistic defects and discrepancies were thus confined to these tribes largely for religious reasons and the grammarians rejected the speech of urban areas and cities as well as the speech of tribes living near the border areas of non-Arabic speaking countries. Modern linguists have criticised their method. The early grammarians looked at the different dialects of these tribes as different images of the same language and mixed them together trying to create one grammar for them all (Mousa, M. 1985 : 94, Younis, F. and Al-Naqah 1977 : 296). Even selecting only these seven tribes because they resided far from the influences of the non-Arabic speaking countries, was questioned by Al-Suyuti. He stated that some of these seven tribes made repeated trips to the borders of the Arabian peninsula where they mixed with Romans and Syrians to the North, the Indians to the South and the Persians to the East. As mentioned in the Koran, the Quraish tribe used to send trade caravans to Yemen every winter and to Syria every summer, residing in these countries for long periods. Thus some of these seven tribes selected as a source for correct speech were also influenced by foreign languages (Al-Suyuti -n.d.-128).

The problem of inconsistency grew more complicated when the members of these different tribes migrated to the newly conquered cities such as Basra, Baghdad and

Kufa. When they had settled differences which had already existed among the different dialects in the desert increased in these conquered lands as they were influenced by the host dialects. Consequently the differences in opinion on grammatical points among the scholars from the schools in these areas increased especially in Basra and Kufa.

Due to the emergence of various schools of grammar in the cities as well as in Andalusia, the consistency problem increased. Each of these schools derived the rules of the grammar from the language or the dialect they spoke which inevitably led to the conflict of rules which is such a noticeable feature of Arabic grammar books.

To give an example of controversy between schools, Kufa and Basra have different views regarding the occurrence of two verbs before their subjects. Basra linguists maintain that the second verb governs the subject, because the second verb is closer to the subject; where as the Kufa linguists contend that the first verb governs the subject because it occurs at the beginning of the sentence (Hasan 1966 : 208) This example is one of thousands in which the schools of grammar are at variance. As a result of that, the student of Arabic faces one of the most serious problems, namely, the multiplicity of conflicting views regarding a single grammatical point in almost all grammatical components. Even basic grammatical issues such as the classification of speech into nouns, verbs, transitive and intransitive verbs the two types of plural (sound and broken), the predicate and the vocative have no single universally accepted grammatical rules. These are just a few examples of many areas of grammar where differences of opinion among many Arabic linguists flourish (Hasan 1966 : 68) This controversy among scholars had led students to confine themselves to the areas of grammar which they have found less controversial, to the exclusion of the greater part of Arabic grammar.

The absence of a single book combining all the grammar in its entirety is another problem which faces the learner. Arabic grammatical components are scattered in hundreds of volumes. Some deal only with grammar whereas others contain grammar as well as other topics such as episodes or epigrams. Furthermore, the student of Arabic faces other problems such as the multiplicity of references, difficulty in finding the topic they are interested in and poor editing and writing. Making any conclusive judgement on a grammatical point is not an easy task for a learner, since he is led to believe that there will be another reference which either supports or contradicts his conclusion. (This problem is discussed further in Chapter Three). In order to encourage students to be interested in grammar, Arabic grammar has to be compiled in a single, modern volume. Relevant points have to be classified, indexed and printed in an up-to-date manner.

• **The philosophy of *cillah* (justification)**

Al-Khouli pointed out that one of the difficulties of Arabic grammar, which both teachers and students complain about, arises from the inappropriateness of applying principles which the early Arab linguists agreed upon in order to analyse the linguistic data (Al-Khouli 1961 : 425).

The philosophy of justification is one of the principles which some linguist believe is one of the causes of difficulties in Arabic grammar. The early grammarians believed that each grammatical rule must have *cillah* a reason or justification. This philosophy was derived from the Islamic school of philosophy (in the eighth century A.D.) which was formed to explain and defend the basic pillars of Islam and monotheism. These philosophical and religious justifications were extended to issues of

Arabic grammar.

Thus grammar was influenced by philosophy because the general intellectual atmosphere favoured philosophical thought, mental analysis, and the revelation of the ambiguous all of which required justification of rules. The justifications in themselves are an appreciable effort by the grammarians, but the grammarians are also to blame for expanding and elaborating them. Nasif (1977) stated that these justifications *cihal*:

appeared in late periods. Their late-beginning was accompanied by the dwindling of cultural life. This weakness was not confined to grammar, but extended to other subjects as well as to all aspects of public life. (p. 10)

I believe that grammatical justification is necessary in grammatical study because it clarifies the reasons for grammatical rules and stabilizes grammar in the mind. However, what makes Arabic grammar difficult for the specialist as well as the non-specialist learner is the aforementioned criticism raised against justifications.

4.3.2 The affector theory

The second principle which some educators believe to be one of the sources of difficulty in Arabic grammar is the affector theory *nadħaryat alcāmil*. This theory is one of the essential arguments of the traditional Arab grammarians permeating almost all tenets of Arabic grammar. This theory, like the theory of justification, has its roots in religious and philosophical beliefs that for everything there must be a creator. It was essential for the early grammarian to believe that each case ending or vowel movement could not have existed without an affector.

According to this theory, the elements in the sentence can be divided into affector (*cāmil*) and affected (*macmūl*). It is important to note that the case endings of the "affected" entity in the sentence are determined by the affector. Thus the inflectional pattern of one element is decided by another element within the sentence. It is also worth mentioning that this theory was extended, over the years, beyond its initially stated goals to include the effect of the affector on sentence structure, style and even word formation. In fact, this theory developed into such a complex field of linguistic study that it came to touch upon every possible grammatical point.

The affector theory became one of the major areas of disagreement between the schools of Basra and Kufa. The first one strongly emphasised this theory in their acceptance or rejection of the speech of certain tribes. (Al-Anbari 1955 : 314 and Mustafa 1959 : 29).

A dispute has risen over the affector theory, its use in the teaching of grammar and the nature of factors themselves. . Supporters of this theory argue that

It has been founded on a basis that makes use of the best modern educational approaches to teaching language, modifying its rules and simplifying its usage.... yet grammarians attribute causation of such factors because they are a guide to meanings and symbols (Hasan 1975 :37).

These factors, both lexical and semantic, help the learner understand word positions and correct vowelization. Thus, it becomes easy for the Arabic language learner and the beginner to see the factor whether it is hidden or manifested, consequently he can vowelise his words and utterances easily and smoothly (Hasan 1966 : 190).

Objectors to the theory of factors are divided into two groups the first of which calls for the complete abandonment of the theory. The second group does not wish to abandon the theory but differs about the nature of factors. Hassan (1973, 199) believes that suspension (*tacliq*) is the central theme of Arabic grammar. Understanding suspension as it is, is sufficient to abolish what he called it the superstition of grammatical factors. Eid (1973) believes that:

Grammatical functions are different in meaning according to context, and based on this difference, expression does change. Vowels and letters which were claimed to be a consequence of factors in Arabic are the outcome of the differential value among word functions in sentences. Therefore, there is no such thing as affector or affected; only words whose functions are different in context. This difference is expressed by vowels, letters, word order and other lexical and semantic conjunctions (Eid, M. 1973: 269).

The objection to the type and nature of the factor is not primarily an objection to the theory itself. It attempts to explain the factor in a different manner from those lexical and semantic factors the supporters of the theory and most grammarians agree on. This view is also supported by Al-Qurtuby (1974) in his famous book *Arradu cala 'annuhāh* Reply to Grammarians. This is referred to in Chapter Five where the reform effort is discussed.

The researcher believes that the theory of grammatical factors is like the backbone for Arabic grammar and alternative theoretical approaches are still immature. This theory is appropriate for the teaching of grammar at different stages. Abandoning the theory means destruction of Arabic grammar because it codifies and stabilizes the criteria of speech in a way that helps the learner to avoid making errors. This does not mean, however, that the factor theory is blemished by some eccentricities which

burden learners, such as teaching debates on explaining factors and excessive interpretation (*tāwīl*) and suppletion (*taqdīr*). All these problems could be excluded from the theory without touching its original purpose so that the benefit of grammar teaching could be achieved.

4.3.3 Grammatical terminology

The large amount of grammatical terminology is one of the factors which contributes to making grammar appear difficult. Undoubtedly, terminology is important for helping understanding and clarification. This applies to all sciences, yet there are some grammatical terms which are taught in the schools unnecessarily. For example the “accompanying object” *mafcūl macah* (*wāw*) can be presented to the students with reference to the meaning of “*wāw*” which makes it followed by *manṣūb* and, therefore, there is no need for a new term.. There are other terms that can be dispensable, such as the defective (*jāmid*), the derivative (*mushtaq*), the conjugative (*munṣarif*) (Abdulrahman A. 1969 : 197).

4.3.4 The method of formulating grammatical rules

Mustafa Mousa sees that what makes grammar difficult for students is the grammarians’ creation of imagined examples from which they then deduce grammatical rules. These examples are rarely based on the students’ own experience of Arabic and are not supported by classical texts derived from linguistic actuality. An example of this is what students learn about the subject of a nominal clause (*ibtidā’*) where grammarians differentiate in the singular predict (*khobar mufrad*) between the defective singular like (*khobar mufrad jāmid*) as in this example: “*Zaid akhūka* (Zaid is your brother) and derivative singular predict (*khobar mufrad mushtaq*) for example *Zaid qā'im*, “Zaid is

standing”. Grammarians differ as to which of them can take a pronoun. Some say that if it is defective it cannot take a pronoun; others believe that it cannot, whether defective or not. This issue taught as part of the topic of the nominal clause is of no importance in grammar, has no relation to language, the objectives of grammar teaching or linguistic actuality (Mousa 1985:107).

I have reviewed in details the nature of Arabic grammar as one of the main sources of Arabic grammar difficulty. I have quoted statements by many educationists and linguists supporting such theory. There, however, others who disagree and question the validity of such theory. Al-Haj argued that:

Each language has its spirit and structure, each language has its grammatical rules and rhetorical methods. These are not confined to one country or one language; both subject (*fācil*) and object (*mafūl*) are found in all languages. Their claim that our grammatical rules and rhetorical methods are more difficult is incorrect. Each language has difficult as well as easy aspects. Grammatical rules and rhetorical methods are as much a part of Arabic as of any other human language characterised by a special genius (1978 :276).

Dr. Aishah Abdul Rahman argues that there is no language in the world that can dispense with its grammatical rules. There is no reason to complain about grammar and its difficulty. There is no scientific subject studied by students without rules and controls that are not easier to understand than the main rules of Arabic (Abdulrahman A 1969:196).

4.3.5 Diglossia

Another reason which is believed to have contributed to the difficulty with Arabic grammar encountered by the student is Arabic diglossia. Bakalla defines this term as follows:

Diglossia is a socio-linguistic term used to denote a state of the language situation in a specific speech community. This word consists of two elements, the prefix 'di..' meaning two and 'glossia' which means 'language' or 'tongue'. It indicates a situation in a speech community in which two types or variations of the same language co-exist side by side, each of which performs a specific function. The situation where two different languages exist side by side in a speech community is usually described as bilingualism or even multilingualism (1980 :85).

Although diglossia can be observed in many languages such as Greek and English, it is more apparent in Arabic language. In other words, the gap between the official language which is used in formal situations and colloquial Arabic which is used as the actual language of everyday activities is too wide. This gap involves all aspects of the colloquial language including syntax, phonology and morphology and the formal written language which is almost uniform throughout the Arabic speaking world and easily understood by native speakers of Arabic in all Arab countries.

Because of this great gap between the formal Arabic (*fuṣḥa*) and the colloquial dialect, a speaker of Arabic must make drastic changes in his speech to express himself in formal Arabic making ease of expression in *fuṣḥa* and retention of classical grammar more difficult. In the case of English, and in contrast to Arabic, although there are certain aspects of the grammar and vocabulary items in spoken English which may not be suitable if used in formal English and vice versa, learning of grammar is facilitated by the narrow gap and similarity between grammatical rules for both spoken and written

forms.

From the aforementioned, one can appreciate the predicament of the Arabic grammar teacher in his effort to teach a form of the language not closely related to everyday speech. The dichotomy in the Arabic language has produced a twofold pedagogical problem: the thorough and detailed study of classical grammar has become the exclusive domain of professional linguists and grammarians, and the mastery of the rules of grammar as set in traditional grammar books is beyond the ability of the great majority of educated native speakers of Arabic, let alone foreign learners (Hassan 1976 : 5).

Another issue regarding the problem of diglossia is the debate between educators about whether to use the local dialect in teaching grammar or not. In his questionnaire, Badri found that some of the teachers who used the local dialect believe that if the main aim of teaching grammar is to help the pupils to understand it, then why should they not use every helpful way to assist the pupils to understand. In this questionnaire, one teacher gave an example regarding the grammatical topic *attawkīd* (stress). He used examples from the local dialect which contained stress. He found this method very effective and found that the students had obtained a clearer conception of stress more easily than by using the standard language (Badri 1979 : 190 ff). The problem of diglossia and what Arabic linguists and educators suggest to solve it, is discussed further in Chapter Five.

4.3.6 Teaching methods

Some Arab educators believe that the methods of teaching grammar are one of the sources of difficulty and complaint about Arabic grammar. Ahmad Amin, one of the

eminent Arab writers in this century, complains about the manner of 'instruction' and calls for one method of teaching for all subjects in Arabic. He points out that grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence and other cognate subjects are taught in Arabic according to old methods, while the modern sciences are taught with modern methods in languages other than Arabic (Ameen 1954 : 481).

Similarly, Sammarra'i (1966), one of the prominent Arab linguists, stated:

Our early grammarians have pre-occupied themselves with matters unrelated to linguistic study. We are teaching traditional grammar intact as it was handed down to us by traditional grammarians; we teach grammar as though it were an historical issue just as we teach ancient sciences and arts. Modern linguistic sciences require us to teach grammar and present it to our students as an aspect of scientific development. This modern technique used in the teaching and study of grammar is an 'a priori' fact in many languages. (p. 5)

While not accepting the opinion that the problem arises from the nature of Arabic, Dr. Aishah Abdulrahman attributes the cause to the fact that Arabic native learners do not study it as a live language, but as artificial rules and solid forms which exhaust both the teachers and the students. They learn their language separately from their linguistic instincts and fail to acquire a taste and an appreciation for their language. The teaching methods, she continues, used in grammar are not just a burden on the students but they also lead to confusion and the loss of the pupil's linguistic spontaneity which they used to have before coming to school (Abdulrahman 1969 : 196).

Dr. Ibrahim Shafe'i (1976) blames the students' weakness in their native tongue on the methods of teaching the language. He says " Teaching Arabic is still based mostly on old, traditional approaches, in which the teacher is the conveyor of information and

the students are the receivers". He, further, believes that the poor performance of Arabic teaching is due to the scarcity of research in the field of Arabic language instruction.

Most of the linguistic studies conducted are academic in their nature. They do not deal with language instruction. The conviction of some Arabic language educators that Arabic is sanctified is one of the factors which contributes to the shortage of research in this field. The other factor, he stated, is the lack of familiarity on the part of the teachers of Arabic with modern methods developed and utilised in other modern languages throughout the world (Shafe'i 1976 : 230 ff).

Dr. Al-Husaini, in the thirties, was one of the few educators acknowledging the shortcomings of Arabic language teaching. He sensed the crisis early on and thought that one of the causes of the difficulties of learning Arabic lay in its teaching methods. He said a literature and grammar should be selected to suit the cognitive level of the learner as well as his tastes, needs and interests. He criticised the traditional methods which he held responsible for killing the talent and creativity of the students. Language should also interact with the cultural and emotional trends of contemporary life (Al-Husaini 1937 : 12 ff).

The present state of Arabic language instruction was criticised by Bin Salameh who held it responsible for the despair of the majority of the students of Arabic and their preference for foreign languages over their native tongue. He also believed that the teaching method has resulted in what he called a privileged language or language of the elite (Bin Salameh 1977 : 20).

Another educator who tried to tackle this crisis was Arafah who changed the traditional ways of teaching grammar. However, the real language, he thought, came through active individual reading and involvement in major works of the language. He stressed that the mental level and readiness of the pupils have to be taken into consideration when teaching Arabic grammar. Failure to do so, in his opinion, had caused the students to dislike grammar throughout their academic life. Fraihat (1981) went so far as to state that:

There seems to be a consensus among Arabic language specialists and educators, especially recently, that the difficulty in learning Arabic is not entirely due to the inherent difficulty and phonetic syntactical richness of the language; instead, it is apparent that the approaches and methods employed in Arabic instruction have contributed considerably to the crisis. (p. 25)

In his dissertation entitled Holistic Education: An alternative approach to Arabic instruction, Fraihat (1981) stated that no serious attempt has been made to enhance the psychological, international, social, universal and experiential growth of students through language learning. Cognitive growth as a goal of language teaching has been ignored. He further blamed the Arabic curriculum for not stressing the deeper cognitive aspects such as problem solving, sound evaluation, critical analysis and decision making. He also claimed that holistic education may be a solution for two serious problems, which are the main concern of educators: the decline of the language competency level and students' negative attitudes towards their own language.

After presenting the historical background to the problem as well as describing the present holistic education in the United States, he presents his own version of holistic education and his alternative approach to the Arabic language curriculum. This

comprises five components: the cognitive component, the affective psychological component, the social component, the universal component and the experimental component. He then outlines general holistic language objectives as well as specific language arts objectives (Fraihat 1981 : 8). He said that:

This holistic educational approach, as it is presented in this study, stresses the traditional knowledge of subject matters (language skills), not for and by themselves but as means to more growth and more knowledge. What it adds to the traditional approach is.....the tying of the subject matter and skills to the individual needs, to the self, so as to render learning meaningful and significant to the learner (ibid : 240 ff).

It should be noticed here that although Fraihat presented his own version of the holistic approach to Arabic teaching, he did not conduct an experimental study to determine the effectiveness of this approach.

It is obvious that it is not an easy task to conduct such an experiment. The need to change attitudes, particularly teachers' attitudes, is one of the obstacles not only to the holistic education approach but also to other new theories, particularly the teachers' attitudes toward the traditional teaching methodology which makes the process of implementing the holistic approach a very crucial step. The UNESCO conference on methodology and curriculum reform stated that "It should be borne in mind in experimental research that it is more difficult to change people than to change situations" (UNESCO 1976 : 9). Another difficulty is the reaction of educators and officials towards this approach which shifts the stress from teacher to student and from the accumulation of information and quantity learning to dealing with information and quality learning (Fraihat 1981 : 243).

4.3.7 Teaching Arabic as one unit

An approach which addresses the problem encountered in teaching Arabic grammar is the integrated unit approach which was:

The trend that was initiated at the beginning of the twentieth century.... There are neither separate rules, nor separate literature, nor separate reading. Instead these branches complement each other to constitute the language that is taught as a unit, until their functions are explicitly clarified. If taught in a natural linguistic situation a grammatical rule for instance can be quickly grasped and awareness of its functions can be obtained (Younis and Al-Naqah 1977 :34).

Abdel Alim Ibrahim has stated that one of the educational benefits of this method is the connection it establishes between types of linguistic studies. Moreover, it guarantees the students' linguistic development in a way that no one linguistic type dominates the others. Thus it is not influenced by the teacher's enthusiasm and devotion. Ibrahim believes that dividing language into branches may spoil its essence and denaturalise it leading to the students' inability to use language correctly. The student seeks correct case endings and pronunciation only during the grammar class. He cares about selecting sentences only during the literature period, and about inscribing words correctly only during the dictation period and he does not care about inscribing these words beautifully except during the handwriting period (Ibrahim n.d.: 51).

The trend towards integration in language teaching was basically founded on researches and studies done in Europe and America but teaching Arabic, is still based on practice, experience and individual effort. Such bases are undoubtedly important, but new researches in psychology, lexicology and education have changed the bases of language teaching to science and experiment in addition to practice and experience

The modern trend in language teaching, for instance, is essentially based on what is called language arts, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. In modern lexicology, these are called language skills which are lacking in early and late Arabic teaching and studies.

Both integration and division theories in language teaching have their pros and cons. It is possible, however, to reach a compromise between them. This can be achieved by looking at all branches of the Arabic language as parts closely related to a whole which is language, and not by considering every branch as a division in itself. We should look upon this division as a device for simplifying the educational process. Accordingly, it would be useful to utilise integration theory in the early scholastic years and the division theory in the later ones.

4.3.8 Curriculum

One of the most important sources of difficulty in English grammar is the unsuitability of the grammar curriculum. It was the cause of the decline of language competency and the negative attitudes of the learners towards their language. The curriculum has been criticised for not capitalising on the level of readiness of pupils and their interests and needs. Students do not understand what they learn and this causes them frustration and makes them think the topic is inherently difficult (Al-Uzeizi 1978 . 5).

The University of Yarmuk in Jordan undertook an investigation into the decline of Arabic language curricular effectiveness and competency level among Jordanian students. The results revealed that among the factors responsible for the frightening

decline in learning Arabic were:

- lack of practicality in curricular planning and material
- lack of experimentation with new curricula before implementation
- over-emphasis on volume at the expense of the quality; and
- failure of the curriculum to include universal human experiences in the educational and scientific areas (Al-Uzeizi 1978 :13).

Badri thought that the language crisis was due to the lack of relevance of the curriculum to the psychological and cognitive needs of the students as emphasised by modern educational theories. In order to have an effective Arabic curriculum, he added, the following factors have to be taken into consideration: free play and observation, intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation, the emotional needs of the learner, a firm sense of responsibility, social awareness, an increase in the learner's choices, the negative effect of direct preaching and the students' learning style (Badri 1979:184).

Abdulaleem Ibrahim, one of the prominent Arab educational and linguistic scholars, described the grammar curriculum in the Arab school in general as being excessively large and crammed with too many subjects that are not commensurate with the cognitive levels of the pupils. He, further, demanded that the planning of curricula and the writing of textbooks be geared to the cognitive level of the students. He also urged the introduction of experimental approaches to grammar with more focus on application (Ibrahim 1976:134 ff).

It is interesting to note that the suggestion of decreasing the quantity of the grammar taught was made centuries ago. Ibn Khaldon was one of the famous scholars who felt it was necessary to teach the Arabic grammar in a way that suited the mental

ability of the learner. Similar suggestions were made by Jahid (Badri 1979 : 186)

Nowadays, most of the Arab countries face this dilemma. For example, the Ministry of Education in Iraq has reported, as quoted by Badri, that Iraqi school language teachers sometimes teach grammar in periods allocated for reading. The reason, Badri thinks, is that teachers are obliged to complete the whole of the large summer textbook, which is not possible in the given time, although the General Directorate of Inspectors has warned teachers against using reading lesson's time for grammar (ibid : 187).

It has been noticed that the syllabuses of grammar teaching have undergone many changes during the last fifty years. Sometimes some grammar subjects are set for a certain period of time, then they are changed but, in the end, the syllabus returns to the original set subjects. Undoubtedly, this is evidence of a lack of proper grounds for selection. Had there been clear and proper grounds for selection, we would not have seen all these changes and amendments.

The problem lies in the fact that grammar specialists were keen on not changing any of the grammar subjects in the syllabus, but were content to stick with the old sequence. Hasan (1966) argued that:

Those hasty restrictive educationists and linguists are like a mother with her only child whom she got after distress and long waiting, so her fierce love pushes her to keep him close all the times and to be over protective. Thus she keeps him away from the harm of the sun, gives him different foods and drinks to excess for fear of his getting weak or thin and dresses him with lots of clothes to make him look prosperous or to protect him unnecessarily. Yet, all this care leads to what she fears : Weakness, sickness, and death (p. 89).

One of the good steps forward in this subject is the change in selecting grammar subjects. It has been noted that some educationalists and even some teachers have started participating in the specialised committees that set the syllabus subjects whereas those committees used to do this alone in the past. Nevertheless, most of these efforts have not produced anything new and have not done anything that would bring back force and liveliness to the grammar class. The only new thing they have done has been to change the outward appearance to make the subject seem more elegant.

4.3.9 *ʿIcrāb*

One of the most important characteristics, perhaps the most difficult part of Arabic grammar, is *ʿicrāb* which is known as either case endings or vowel endings. It has been studied from the early days of Islam. Historically, *ʿicrāb* was one of the characteristics of the Semitic languages; however only the Arabic language has retained *ʿicrāb* while the rest have discarded it. Since Arabic is a highly inflected language, it is very important to pay close attention to *ʿicrāb* because it defines the pronunciation and the pronunciation defines the meaning. Making mistakes in pronouncing vowels could change the whole meaning. Therefore, not only Arab grammarians care about *ʿicrāb* but also Islamic religious scholars. Both the Koran and the Prophet's saying cannot be pronounced and understood correctly unless *ʿicrāb* is well mastered. Badri (1979) stated that:

ʿIcrāb has four cases: nominative, accusative, nouns and verbs; nouns governed by a preposition and jussive verbs only. Each of these four cases has its own diacritic. The nominative takes the *ḍammah* ‘ ˆ ’, the accusative takes the *fathas* ‘ ˉ ’, a noun governed by prepositions takes the *kasra* ‘ ˘ ’, and the jussive takes the *sikon* ‘ 0 ’. (p. 182)

It is noticeable that *'icrāb* is ignored except on formal occasions. In fact, it has never been fully mastered by the highly educated, let alone the ordinary people. Chejne reports that making mistakes in *'icrāb* is common even among the ablest of philologists. One of them was Al-Furra who was famous for his purism and eloquence. He is reported to have made obvious mistakes in conversation with the Caliph Al-Rashid, who asked Al-furra about them. He replied ".....the *'icrāb* comes naturally to the Bedouins as the faulty speech is natural to the city dwellers. However, when I reflect I don't commit faulty speech, but when I am unaware or speak naturally, I do commit errors" (Chejne 1969 : 50).

Teaching grammar in most Arab countries is confined to case endings and I accept the importance and necessity of a knowledge of case endings to comprehend the Koranic language. Further, I reject those appeals for eliminating it on the pretext of simplifications for Arabic students (see Chapter Five).

Al-Hakeem has already discussed the traditional concept that often views the function of grammar as mainly concerned with case endings. He writes:

The viewpoints claiming that the function of grammar is related to case endings are refuted by the fact that lexicology is concerned with sentence construction as it should be. Similarly, traditional Arabic grammar teaches us how to apply case endings (*'icrāb*) and how to combined words within the scope of the sentence (Al-Hakeem 1977: 72).

Studying semantics is also one of the neglected features in teaching Arabic grammar. This was referred to at the Seminar on Simplifying Arabic Teaching in

Algiers which confirmed the defectiveness of confining Arabic grammar teaching to case endings. Meanings have also to be known for they form a part of grammar (Union of Arabic Linguistic Assemblies 1977:140).

Dr. Tammam Hassan states that the impulse towards grammatical study and codification derived from the spread of grammatical errors and solecisms. These common errors occurred only in word case endings but were also phonetic and lexical, which was apparent when foreign words are selected instead of their Arabic equivalents (Hassan 1973:12).

4.3.10 Unnecessary grammatical rules

Some specialists in teaching Arabic grammar observe that one of the reasons for difficulty and complaint is that in teaching students, grammatical components were not confined to those components which help students to avoid committing errors. This is what the Westerners call functional grammar.

Ibn Hayan (1961 :33) was one of the early Arab scholars who referred to this issue. In his book entitled *Muqadimah fi 'annahw* An Introduction in Grammar: he writes...

Grammarians and all those concerned with Arabic language have been too long-winded in dealing with grammatical issues and have paid too much attention to justifications of rules at the expense of the student who needs a clear introduction to straightforward technique in Arabic to help him think, memorise and understand. Thus I have thought deeply about writing a book that includes origins, tools and other factors that would help beginners without being bored and ponderous. Therefore, I have written this book where I have not omitted any tool, justification, or proof that should be included. Anyone who reads this book should find help in correcting his language in writing a book, reading poetry, delivering a speech or writing letters.

Al-Gahith, the well-known man of letters who lived during the 7th century A D, echoed Ibn Haiyan's views when he wrote that difficult grammatical components that have no effect on the course of the student's life and that are of no importance to him should be excluded (Al-Sayed 1969 : 13).

At the present time, functional grammar has received much attention from educationalists. During the Algeria's Panel in (1976), this issue was debated and it was suggested that Arabic grammar belongs to an age other than ours. These grammatical rules were designed to make Arabic a precise, strong and fully integrated language. Furthermore, it was suggested that students need only that part of the grammar set down by early grammarians which helps reading and understanding texts correctly (Union of Arabic Language Assemblies 1977 : 137). Commenting on this issue, Dr. Al-Tahir has said:

It would be better if we had a committee that cares for the language and uses the red pen to omit unimportant components from the syllabus of grammar which are not helpful for students to read, speak or write. This Committee is surprised at the amount of dead material and will excuse students if they did not understand or if they hate their language because of such materials. The Committee, then, should tear up bundles of pages full of out dated materials in the books of grammar (Al-Sayed 1987 : 25).

I think that Dr. Al-Tahir paints a somewhat exaggerated picture of the problem, but I agree with him that grammar syllabuses contain many functionless components which must be revised to suit the age of the student and make him like the language and feel how important and useful it is for him. Yet, this should not lead us into this fierce attack on the efforts of those early grammarians who have rendered the best

service to Arabic. Such attacks might undermine the principles and negatively affect the basis of this unique language.

Samak has presented four conditions for grammar to be functional as follows First, teaching grammar should be confined to the needs of the students. Second, treatment should come after diagnosis of weakness for each individual student. This method is better than the collective one. Third, minimising functionless components or omitting them from the syllabus of grammar and fourth, student's motivations should be stimulated in order for them to feel the need for the rule. This is essential for a better use of the language (Samak 1979 :765 ff).

4.3.11 Examination

Fraihat (1981) argued that:

Many educators have held the examination and exercise system responsible for the weakness of the learners of Arabic grammar. Dr. Dhuni pointed out that the examination distorts the students' learning experience and distracts him from the real objectives of language learning. He further says that the examination in reality is the final contact between students and literature (p. 19).

One of the problems facing the examination system of Arab grammar is the excessive attention it pays to technical terminology, memorisation of rules and quotations to the effect of the validity of a rule or the irregularity of some examples and so forth. This makes grammar an end in itself regardless of its functional use in style and meaning. Accordingly, examinations should accommodate modern methods by testing students to measure how far the objectives of teaching Arabic grammar have been achieved (Samak 1979 : 765).

On the other hand, Abdel Aleem Ibrahim believes that the crisis of Arabic grammar is not caused by grammar syllabuses taught in schools and universities. Nor is it caused by modern grammar books which, he believes, have successfully updated, nor is it caused by teaching methodology where teachers have exerted themselves in learning modern techniques. Ibrahim believes that the reason is the shortage of grammar classes and a lack of attention to the nature of examinations. Instead, attention seems to be paid to other branches which are believed by the educational policy makers to be more important (Ibrahim 1969 : 5).

I agree with Ibrahim that examinations and the way they are prepared together with the insufficient of the number of classes are two reasons of the crisis of grammar. But what he says about the teaching methodologies, grammar books and grammar syllabuses - that they did not create the crisis - is in my opinion, untrue. I have investigated these matters, and both the writings of educational specialists and current opinion as expressed at conference support the view that the crisis in teaching grammar results from all the factors discussed, not just those favoured by Ibrahim.

The written examination is the most common way of testing students in what they have understood about grammar. A few teachers use the oral examination as when they ask the student to write an example on the blackboard or to show the case ending of a specific word or to show its gender. This style in examining and correcting students has, however, two demerits: firstly it often overlooks the measurement of the student's grammatical level in expression and fails to clarify and treat their common mistakes. Secondly, the examiner rarely cares about the relationship between the questions he poses and the subjects the student has dealt with in previous stages or about measuring

linguistic skills specified by the teacher.

It seems that the examinations problem has different manifestations in different Arab countries. Students in many Arab countries suffer from failure in grammar, but in Egypt, according to Ahmad Amin, despite the fact that students are weak at grammar, the examination results seem good and the failure percentage is low. This is due to one of two reasons: either the complaint is meaningless which of course is not logical or it could be that the examinations are not conducted properly which is more acceptable. Amin argues that one of the reasons for the problem of examinations is that the theories of grammar are so flexible that they can justify many grammatical errors. He adds that the teachers' own neglect of grammar makes them sympathetic while correcting the students' papers. This leads to the high percentage of success along with the obvious weakness at the subject of grammar (Birani, F 1972: 33).

Awatif Al-Husaini has interviewed female teachers, supervisors and students of intermediate stage. There was complete consensus that examinations, in general, disregard the importance of grammar. In the written examinations, any expression is acceptable, and big mistakes and strange structures or constructions are tolerated. Examination systems look for information regardless of correct grammar. Al-Husaini adds that even the grammar examination itself is concerned only with the rules and their examples and does not pay attention to the real aim of teaching grammar (Al-Husaini 1980: 165).

4.3.12 Grammar teachers

There is no doubt that the teacher is the corner-stone for the success of the educational process. Syllabuses, books and tools are all important factors, yet they are

inanimate and dull and the teacher is the person who instills life in them

This is the role and importance of teachers in general. The importance of the teacher of Arabic grammar is greater due to the importance of the language he teaches for Arabic is the language of the Holy Koran and the national language too (see Chapter Three). Thus the effect of the grammar teacher's importance is doubled and his role is of great value in surmounting and simplifying the difficulties encountered in learning grammar.

Regrettably, despite this the position of the grammar teacher in the Arab countries is not satisfactory and does not match the importance of his role. A special questionnaire was given to experts and specialists in teaching Arabic who were meeting in Amman (Jordan) in 1974. One of the results of this questionnaire was their unanimous agreement on the weakness of the Arabic teacher. Preparing Arabic teachers does not follow one system, and there is general agreement on the weakness of such preparation with regard to the materials and the methods used (Al-Hammadi 1974 : 210).

Al-Samman has referred to the importance of testing the Arabic teacher before selection by examining his linguistic ability before he specialises in Arabic. Specialists and those in charge of education should follow up his work and update his information and methods continuously. They should also provide him with periodicals and specialised magazines and convene symposia and seminars. Al-Samman affirms that the most obvious flaw in the attitude of the Arabic teacher is his willingness to settle for his first level of achievement and not seek out new developments in his subject (Al-Samman 1974 : 45).

I have noticed myself during supervision of candidates for teaching grammar that most of them are not specialists in Arabic. Owing to the small number of students specialising during university in teaching grammar, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has allowed specialists in Islamic studies at university to teach grammar. In my view this further exacerbates the problems involved in teaching grammar. Grammar teachers should like and understand the subject they teach, otherwise they will not succeed in teaching it. What is the benefit of a four year course specialising in Islamic sciences if the teacher finds himself at the end teaching such a difficult subject? It is unacceptable, in my view, that the Ministry of Education entrusts him to teach grammar, which he has never been trained to teach, even for one single period

I believe that if the Ministry of Education bears a great deal of the responsibility, the non-specialised teacher is also to blame. The Ministry of Education offers graduate teachers of the Islamic Studies Department the opportunity, to teach in their fields, but outside the main Saudi cities: Mecca, Riyadh and Jeddah. Some of them refuse this offer with the excuse that they wish to live near their families and relatives in the urban centres. The Ministry then obliges them to teach grammar.

Two concerns arise from this situation: firstly, there is no equilibrium or order in the programme of preparing teachers in different specialisms; while there is a large surplus of teachers of Islamic Studies, there is a big shortage of specialists for teaching Arabic. It is true that one of the reasons behind this problem is the lack of students specialising in Arabic but this is not an excuse for the Ministry to shun its responsibility for filling this gap and trying to handle this problem successfully.

Secondly, Islamic studies teachers who teach grammar should have sacrificed their own interest for the benefit of students. Consequently, they should teach in their specialised subjects even if this is in other cities away from their homes. To take on teaching such a difficult subject as grammar and jeopardise the students' standards and linguistic skills for the sake of living near their families and friends is insupportable and anybody who is keen on the future of students and the standard of their command of Arabic should not accept such behaviour.

One of the reasons for poor performance of grammar teachers is their general academic weakness, when they go to university whether to Arabic departments or faculties of education or faculties of Arabic themselves. It is regrettable that in most Arab countries outstanding graduates of the secondary school are eager to join scientific colleges like engineering or medicine and also socially reputable colleges like economics or information. Such colleges demand high marks for joining them. Thus, many students with low marks resort to specialisation in different fields, such as Arabic. The result is the preparation of a weak teacher who will convey his weakness and ignorance to the students and so on (Abdultawab, cited by Mousa 1985 : 114).

Mostafa Mousa has pointed out that English and French departments in the Egyptian universities expect high marks in the language of specialisation in the secondary school as well as success at interview or an admission test before a student joins the department. He added that this is not applied to the Arabic department as it is open for both willing and un-willing students with the excuse of meeting the shortage of Arabic teachers. The result is that the students of this department graduate but they are less skilful than their counterparts in other departments (Mousa 1985 : 114).

4.3.13 Media

The mass media in the Arab countries undoubtedly bear part of the responsibility for the grammar teaching problem. In a meeting of experts in Arabic in Amman (Jordan) in 1974, reports relating to the role of the mass-media in serving the Arabic language were discussed. Many people felt that the media oppose the objectives of schools. This is due to the widespread use of colloquial Arabic in newspapers, magazines and both audio and visual broadcasting (ALESCO,1974 : 17).

Abdul Aleem Ibrahim, in his paper presented to the ninth conference for teaching branches of Arabic, referred to the different mass-media as having a great effect on the public due to their continuous output. Any grammatical mistakes found in the media destroy the efforts of grammar teachers. He added that he has noticed that one of the sports commentators repeats a particular grammatical mistake while commenting on matches. When Ibrahim was visiting schools at different stages, he noticed that all the students were repeating this mistake, imitating that particular announcer (Ibrahim 1976 : 139).

The problem is not only the widespread grammatical mistakes in the mass-media but also it is the deliberate policy of those in charge of mass-media to keep on using local dialects as a tool of expression in programmes, songs and serials. This has, in one way or another, led to the weakness from which students suffer now. The only excuse the people in charge of the mass-media have is that the public want broadcasting in colloquial Arabic, and they avoid programmes speaking classical Arabic which in my view is not correct as people belonging to different classes and educational levels listen on Fridays, the holy day for Muslims, to the preaching in classical Arabic, but we have

not heard complaints about difficulty in understanding. The same thing applies to other programmes broadcast in classical Arabic, such as the news or official announcements; again we have not heard about a complaint or a request for broadcasting in colloquial Arabic.

Ibrahim believes that the way to remedy this phenomenon would be by establishing local bodies for linguistic censorship on all that is published by the various mass-media whether the T.V., the radio or the press. The outcome would be correctness of the language listened to by millions of native speakers of Arabic (ibid · 139). In addition, training announcers to improve their standards, preparation, selection and commitment would raise their linguistic levels and help limit this linguistic crisis

It is worth mentioning here that English speaking people face an almost similar crisis. Johnston (1976) stated that:

Perhaps the most pervasive influence on our language, however, is television. Children are subjected to the brain washing of poor grammar on TV from earlier years. They come to believe that “clean” is a noun because they have heard the commercial ‘You get a lot of dirt with kids, but you get a lot of clean with Tide’. A panty-hose advertisement advises that a particular brand of stocking fits ‘good’. Professionally speaking, Ajax dish-washing cleaner does the best job. How can Ajax speak professionally or unprofessionally? We are asked to shop A and P. (When did “shop” become a transitive verb?). The list is endless (p. 9).

Johnston further complains about the effect of T.V. on students’ language, especially those who come to high schools and universities and who have spent a lot of time sitting in front of the T.V. watching films and other entertainments This has made the act of reading unfamiliar to them. Without the ability to read intelligently or

an interest in reading it is difficult to what he called “feel” for the language or to assimilate and absorb proper grammar. (ibid : 9).

4.4 Concluding remarks

From the general overview of the written work of both students and those who have graduated, and are in employment throughout society, the prevalence of grammatical errors is immediately apparent. Both teachers and students try to evade the issue of the grammar of the Arabic language. This chapter addresses all their complaints. This weakness was discussed with various educators and specialists to elicit their point of view. It was discovered that the problem may be attributed to a number of factors. Some of these were educational, such as teaching methods used, and the nature of the examination system. Others referred to people’s own circumstances, including the surrounding environment, such as the influence of the mass media.

It is said ‘for every action there is also an equal reaction’. Thus, many deeply serious and significant simplification efforts have been undertaken by educators interested in the Arabic language to improve the standard of Arabic grammar teaching. However, these attempts were merely interpretative in nature; some of them were well advised, and others, not. In the following chapter, some of these efforts to address the difficulty of Arabic grammar will be discussed.

Chapter Five

Reaction to the Prevalence of Grammatical Errors

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Reaction to the Prevalence of Grammatical Errors

5.1 Preface

One of the issues discussed in the previous chapter was complaints about the linguistic weakness of students of the Arabic language and the resulting prevalence of grammatical errors. Understandably, this language crisis has been the focus of attention of linguistic, education and religious scholars for more than six centuries. In their attempts to resolve the crisis they have proposed a range of measures, some extremely severe, others remarkably lax.

This chapter will discuss these scholars' attempts to simplify the teaching of Arabic, particularly the grammar. A critical review of these attempts is given and followed by an overview of the empirical studies that have been carried out on both grammar teaching in general and the analysis of grammatical errors in particular. These field studies together with the present work are considered to be a continuation of the efforts towards resolving the problem of weakness in students' command of the Arabic language.

5.2 Early attempts

Although the main effort at simplification has been made during the twentieth century, there were a few scholars in the thirteenth century who felt the need to simplify Arabic grammar, one of whom was Ibn Mada Al-Qurtubi (1974), the Andalusian

scholar. Therefore, it may not be accurate to believe that Arabic grammar as well as other aspects of the language needing to be simplified is recent. In his famous book, *Al-radū cala Annihāh*, Al-Qurtubi (1974) criticised some of the basic tenets of traditional grammatical presentations, including the theory of factor (*nadharyat al cāmīl*) which has been discussed in Chapter Four. He attributed to this theory the difficulties from which Arabic grammar suffers. He maintained that case endings (*icrāb*) are semantic manifestations created by the speaker himself, and preoccupation with grammatical governing has led grammarians to reject correct styles and sentences.

Ibn Fudal (died in the tenth century A.D.) wrote an introduction to Arabic grammar where he collected all the basic rules of Arabic grammar to make it approachable for those learning grammar for the first time. He co-ordinated his material beautifully and presented it in a brief style devoid of unnecessary details and complications. Explaining his method of simplification, Ibn Fudal says .

In all this, I aimed at brevity and summarisation and avoided prolixity and redundancy so that this book would be quantitatively small, qualitatively rich (Cited by Jaba Allah 1987 : 34).

Also Abdel-Qaher Al-Jirjany (died in the eleventh century A.D.) invented in his book *dalā' il al-'icjāz* Signs of Inimitability, a new system for Arabic grammar that goes beyond the concentration on case endings. In this system, he does not separate grammar from literature or rhetorics. He also draws the attention to the disadvantages of confining Arabic grammar to case endings without regard to eloquence (Jaba Allah 1987 :35).

These attempts were the early roots of the modern simplification efforts. They were not particularly profound and scientifically systematic, but they remain the fundamental source of subsequent attempts.

Though the Ottoman Empire, which lasted until the 19th century contributed a great deal to Islamic civilisation, the study of Arabic was neglected and the art of literary expression deteriorated. Many Arabic speakers learned Turkish in preference to their own language which accelerated the decline of Arabic. By the nineteenth century, classical Arabic had fallen into disuse and the Arab people appeared to forget that they had built a great empire and a remarkable culture (Chejne 1969 : 83 ff).

5.3 Modern attempts

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Arabs began to look on their language with pride and with the new awareness of nationalism which resulted in attempts to revive and strengthen the Arabic language and to make it more accessible to the people. It is worth mentioning that the pioneers of the simplification effort of Arabic grammar during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not true linguists; rather they were scholars, religious advocates and politicians such as Al-Tahtawi of Egypt, Qasim Ameen, a social reformer and Mahmud Sami Al-Barodi. These individuals were very concerned with the state of the Arabic language and the complex way in which the grammarians had presented it to generations of learners. However, not many of them put forward specific views or proposals for simplifying the description of the language. The linguistic reformers in the twentieth century, by contrast, did present many proposals for simplification in an attempt to make the language more accessible to learners of Arabic grammar. Efforts to simplify the Arabic language in this century can

be classified into two types. The first one is individual effort made by linguists and educators. The second is the contribution of different organisations.

In his famous book *ʾIhyāʾ Annaḥw*, The Revival of Grammar which was first published in 1937, Ibrahim Mustafa made one of the first attempts at the simplification of the Arabic language and Arabic grammar in particular.

After criticising the earlier grammarians who believed that the ultimate goal of the grammar was to determine the case ending (*ʾicrāb*), Mustafa focused on the single word, rather than the total meaning of all the words in a sentence. Mustafa further stated that there were many languages without case endings at the end of words. In these languages, he added, the end of the word did not change from one position in the sentence to another, but their grammars, according to him, did adequately explain how words were put together to form meaningful sentences, explanations lacking in traditional Arabic grammar (Mustafa 1959 : 2).

In contrast to some orientalist, Mustafa regarded case endings *ʾicrāb* to be movements indicating the various meanings of the words, not just syntactic devices to identify the subject or the object of the verb. He thought that it would be easier for the pupils of grammar and thus increase reading comprehension if *ʾicrāb* was viewed as semantic rather than syntactic movements.

According to Mustafa, the *ḍammah*, i.e. the marker of the nominative case, indicated that the noun which carries it is the entity referred to, whether through a verb, in the verbal sentence or a nominal unit in the equational sentence. He further argued

that the *kasrah*, the marker of the genitive case, will indicate that the noun which carries it is related to the preceding word. He stresses that the *fatha*, the marker of the accusative case, is not a case ending. Therefore, in Arabic grammar, for Mustafa, there are only two case endings: the nominative and the genitive (*ḥalāt arraʿf wa ḥalāt alkasrah*).

The reaction to Mustafa's ideas was very strong. Scholars at Al-Azhar in Cairo published a book entitled *ʿAnnahw wa ʿAnnuhāh Bayna ʿAl-ʿAzhar Wa ʿAl-Jāmicah Grammar and the Grammarian between Al-Azhar and the University* which criticised Mustafa's book (Jaba Allah 1987 : 38).

In fact, these two opinions, that of Mustafa and that held by the scholars at Al-Azhar represent the main division among Arab linguists on linguistic issues, can be traced to the different educational backgrounds of Mustafa and the scholars at Al-Azhar.

Some linguists have received their training in conservative institutions such as Al-Azhar while others have acquired it in foreign institutions - French, British, German, American, etc. "They (the conservatives) failed at first to realise that language is subject to the same changes as those affecting society in the political, economic, intellectual and educational spheres. Remaining loyal to a concept of linguistic purity based on the Koran and the classical literature, they have adamantly resisted any change" (Chejne 1969 : 146).

On the other hand, the modernists viewed linguistic issues in terms of

adaptability to modern needs without any regard to tradition. According to Chejne, they had acquired a colonial mentality and viewed Arabic culture in general, and the Arabic language in particular, as an archaic remnant of the old and the awkward (ibid 146).

The modernists' second attempt after Mustafa's, was initiated by the Committee for Simplifying Rules held in 1938 by the Egyptian Ministry of Education. One of the conclusions of this committee concerned the reasons that make grammar difficult for learners and educators. Some of these are excessive justification, supposition and terminology, all of which separated literature from grammar. One of the important recommendations of the Committee was the collection of the subject, doer, and passive subject in one chapter called *musnad*. It also abolished the implied pronoun whether optional or compulsory (Al-Sayed 1987 : 50).

The proposals of this Committee, together with the committee itself, were fiercely criticised by Al-Azhar scholars in particular. This attempt was looked upon as a corruption of Arabic and a transgression of religion. Replying to the Committee, Abdel Hamid Al-Aggan stated in Al-Ahram :

The Arabic language is not one of the possessions of Egypt or the Egyptian Ministry of Education, but all the Arab and Islamic world possess it. Therefore, the authority over it cannot be passed to a sect that does not represent those in charge of Arabic. All of Al-Azhar, the Arabic Academy, Dar El-Oloum (Faculty of Arabic) and many other institutions in Egypt, together with Arabic scholars outside Egypt should also participate (Quoted by Jaba Allah 1987 : 39).

Another attempt at simplification was based on proposed changes in methods of education. The Arabic Inspector Conference was held in Cairo in 1957. The participants at the conference adopted a new educational methodology in grammar which was implemented in Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

This methodology relies on the assumption that all Arabic speech consists of sentences, complements and styles. Sentences have two main pillars which were commonly termed as *musnad* and *musnad 'elayh*. Complements are the words that add a supplementary meaning to the main sentence and styles are special expressions used by the old Arabs which should be memorised and practised.

The conference also recommended the incorporation of grammatical terms, arguing that following the traditional ways adopted by the early grammarians is useless for correcting speaking and writing. It re-affirmed that, through such incorporation, the meaning of the term will be clear to the student who will know when to use it. For example, in lessons on parts of speech, nouns, verbs and particles should not be treated independently; the gender division into male and female should be taught under (agreement), as should the singular, the dual and the plural (Al-Sayed 1987 : 52).

It seems that application of the recommendations of this conference did not last for long, because a session for simplifying grammar was held at the Faculty of Dar-El Oloum in Cairo in 1961. It was attended by specialists, Arabic teachers and teachers from the Arabic Academy, Al-Azhar and the Ministry of Education. They evaluated the previous experiment and decided to dispense with the method adopted in teaching grammar while expressing appreciation of the great efforts and good intentions

characterising the efforts of all those who had been involved in the development of the method, whether by proposing it or arguing against it (Ministry of Education, Cairo 1991 : 6).

In his attempt to simplify Arabic grammar in his book *fitaysīr al-carabīyah wa tatwīrihā* Towards Simplification and Modernisation of Arabic (1973), a well-known Arabic linguist, Fuad Tarazi, laid down five basic principles:

- (1) that Arabic linguistic theory has to be consistent with modern theory
- (2) that the gap between the classical language and everyday speech has to be narrowed
- (3) that the differences among dialects has to be eliminated in terms of vocabulary, its meaning, derivations and syntactic features
- 4) that the differences of opinion among the grammarians have to be eliminated
- (5) that the presentation of grammar should be more flexible.

Tarazi, in his practical suggestions, criticised the traditional presentations of Arabic grammar which classify speech into nouns, verbs and particles, which, in his view, created the problem of words that cannot be placed in any one of those categories, which then leads to the invention of a new category. Tarazi gave as an example the loose definition of speech categories. The definition of the noun as “that which takes nunnation (*tanwīn*), the definite article (*ʾadāt al-tacrīf*), or can occur in *ʾidāfa*”, Tarazi points out that there are many instances of nouns occurring without nunnation, the definite article or *ʾidāfa*”.

The dual system *muthammā* of the noun was criticised by Tarazi. He believes that only the Arabic language among the Semitic languages is the one which observes this system comprehensively. In Arabic, the dual is applicable to all nouns and has two case endings: the nominative *rafʿ* represented by *anī* and the genitive/accusative *naṣb jarr* represented by *aynī*. He finds these two different forms to be confusing and suggests that the use of the dual should be confined to the form ending in *aynī* which is used in all other Semitic languages, as well as in the daily speech (Tarazi 1973: 33).

In his effort to narrow the gap between the written and the spoken language, Tarazi proposes the elimination of the broken plural *jamc taksīr* and subjection of all plural nouns to analogy as in other Semitic languages. He also calls for grouping the masculine broken plural with masculine sound plurals.

Tarazi notes that the multiplicity of broken plurals for a single noun in Arabic is a burden for pupils. The noun *qaws* for example can have the following plural forms : *qisiyy*, *'aqyās*, *qiyās*, *'aqwās*, *aqwus*, or *qusiyy*. He believes that the broken plural is a remnant of a primitive stage of the language. Other Semitic languages, with the exception of Ethiopic, do not have the broken plural.

Despite the fact that Tarazi called for the simplification of Arabic grammar, it seems to me that he went beyond the goal he set for himself, and attempted to reform the Arabic language itself, a topic which will be discussed later in this Chapter.

5.3.1 The abolition of grammar

As a reaction to complaints about the difficulty of grammar in both teaching and learning, vociferous calls have been made demanding either the abolition of grammar teaching, or the abolition of case endings. Each camp believes that it is on the right path for solving this linguistic crisis.

Samak has referred to some educationalists who believe that assigning periods for grammar lessons is nonsense and a waste of the student's time and effort. They support their opinion by the fact that the ancient Arabs, despite their illiteracy, spoke classical Arabic instinctively. Therefore, they believe that the best way for developing the students' linguistic level is training them to speak properly in order to get used to sound sentences and classical Arabic without studying grammar (Samak 1979 743). Moreover, they argued that grammar is hard, dry and stirs the student's boredom. It is analytical and abstract and beyond the students' ability, particularly in their early stages. Besides, grammar is futile for avoiding errors in speech and writing. Most litterateurs do not know much about grammar (Ibrahim ND. 204).

Though I agree with this opinion about the linguistic crisis in teaching grammar, this view and the means adopted to solve the crisis are somewhat extreme. There is no comparison between contemporary and ancient Arabs, for social life and linguistic standards were different in the age of the early Arabs. Arabic, then, was pure. The evidence is that the Koran was revealed from God, as Muslims believe, in the language of that period. But, at present, slang and ungrammatical speech have prevailed. Learning Arabic can no longer be as it was during the reign of Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib, when

Arabic was sound and pure. Nowadays, it is necessary to learn grammar to achieve a good standard in Arabic. In support of this view, Aisha Abdulrahman (1969) has stated that:

there is no language on earth that dispenses with its grammar, while being taught at schools. When we learn European languages, we never leave out grammatical rules. No scientific subjects dispense with their rules and restraints which are probably not easier than the rules of Arabic grammar. (p.196)

It is noticeable here that anyone who is unable to draw or take photographs requires the abolition of the relevant rules and procedures. The same applies to the student lacking in fluency and eloquence, who calls for the abolition of rhetoric. There are also some cultured people who start groaning and complaining about grammatical rules when they come to speak ungrammatically and make a lot of mistakes in writing. They claim that grammar is disabling and futile, believing that it is better to ignore and abolish it. Thus, it becomes clear that in each branch of science, there is a number of ignorant people who are unable to understand, believing that the only solution is the abolition of whatever makes them feel disadvantaged.

5.3.2 The issue of *icrāb*

As has been discussed in a previous chapter, the Arabic language, like its sisters in the Semitic languages, is very highly inflected and *icrāb* (case endings) is one of its main characteristics. *icrāb* is also one of the most controversial subjects in Arab grammar teaching in modern times. Chejne argued that:

The Arabic-speaking person may have a feeling of un-easiness regarding *icrāb* but generally has not objected to it. In recent times there has been a movement to eliminate it altogether on the assumption that this would help to simplify the language (1969: 51)

One of the most famous advocates of the new approach in simplifying Arabic grammar was Anis Fraiha in his book Towards Simplified Arabic(1955). One of the areas which he considered the root cause of the problem was the existence of what he called " two different languages ": the everyday colloquial *cāmmiah* and the classical Arabic *fuṣḥa*.

The big difference between these two forms makes the student of Arabic learn almost entirely different languages. He suggested three ways to solve this problem. Firstly, to make *fuṣḥa* the language of everyday use. He criticised this trend stating that there was no evidence that the standard language was the everyday language. He also added that colloquial dialects are living languages and it is natural for any language to lose *'icrāb* (vowel endings) and then break into many dialects which may be native languages. Secondly, to retain the situation as it is and impose one of the Arab countries' dialects. He thought this proposal would not work because many of the Arab countries can dominate politically and thus impose their dialect. Establishing a unified dialect is the third proposal which to Fraiha is the most effective and feasible (Fraiha 1955 : 188 ff).

In explaining the proposal for constructing a unified dialect, Fraiha stresses that two steps have to be taken in order to assure success. The first is to drop *'icrāb* case endings which, as explained earlier, is helpful from a pedagogical point of view. According to Fraiha it does not matter whether the word *manāṭiq* (areas) for example, is pronounced as *manāṭiqun*, *manāṭiqan*, *manāṭiqu*, or *manāṭiqa*. The second step is to base this unified dialect on *fuṣḥa* for all vocabulary structures and idioms (ibid 190)

Ahmad Ameen (1944) believed that the main difference between the colloquial dialects and the classical language is *'icrāb*. He thought that *'icrāb* is the principal source of difficulty in the spread of literary language. To remedy this, Ameen proposed the development of a language which would not only assimilate the positive elements of the vernacular idiom and free it from the burden of pedantic vocabulary, but which above everything else, would abolish the desinential flections and thus simplify the very foundations of the language.

Al-Kholi (1961) stated that while we live using very simple language (colloquial) free of *'icrāb*, we tend to learn a language full of *'icrāb*, as if we are learning a foreign language. *'icrāb*, to him, is inconsistent, full of exceptions and contradictions. The solution, he added, is to leave the grammarians and their views and go back to the basic principles from which they derived the rules to find out whatever suits our modern times and eliminate the *'icrāb* and its signs.

These suggestions have provoked very stormy protests in the name of preserving the spirit of the Arabic language. Nasif, for example, gives various instances to prove the significance and necessity of *'icrāb* for understanding the meaning. The desinential flection determines the distinction between subject and object in the following example: *Angathā alwālid alwalad* (the father saved the son), even if the order of the words is changed, this distinction remains. Without *'icrāb* it is really impossible to determine the true subject and object (Nasif 1957 : 15). He stated that:

those who call for the elimination of *'icrāb*, alleging that there are other means for communication with each other without the presence of *'icrāb*, are like those who advocate the elimination of language altogether, alleging that there

are other ways of communication without the need for speech (ibid: 21).

The call for the elimination of grammar and *'icrāb* is leading directly or indirectly to the replacement of standard Arabic *fuṣḥa* with colloquial *cāmmiah*. In the next section, I shed some light on attempts to simplify the language by calling for colloquial usage.

5.3.3 The call for colloquial Arabic (*cāmmiah*)

Before discussing pro and anti colloquial views, it is worth repeating Cowan's comment about colloquial Arabic, that it is

what native speakers of Arabic are native of. No Arab is a native speaker of modern standard Arabic. The grammatical differences between the various colloquials and modern standard Arabic are diverse and in some cases quite far reaching (1968 : 30).

Some scholars, linguists and educators from the beginning of the twentieth century have looked into the crisis of grammar and called for radical change to have the dialects supplant the standard written Arabic free from any, as they term them, rigid grammatical rules. Fraiha was one of the advocates of the need for colloquial Arabic. He reasons that the Arabs have two languages which are worlds apart - one reflects the world of reality, the other reflects the world of artificiality. We use dialect "when we think, speak, sing, murmur our prayer, talk tenderly to our children, whisper in the ears of our beloved ones...." (Fraiha 1952 :54 quoted by Chejne 1969:162).

Mohammed Taymour (1959) went further than incorporating dialect into *fuṣḥa*, in fact he used the colloquial as a substitute for *fuṣḥa* in some of his literary works

The call for colloquial usage was rejected by the vast majority of scholars from different specialities. They believed that standard Arabic is clear, concise and very expressive. More importantly, it has the advantage of preserving the Koran and the great literary tradition. Murqus (1943) stated that:

If we were to replace classical Arabic by the colloquial, what would happen to the cultural and literary heritage? How will posterity understand the traditions of our pious ancestors which are embodied in a large number of precious books? How will it acquaint itself with the essence of religion and the minuteness of legislation treasured therein? Besides, which one of the existing dialects should we choose to take the place of the classical? (p. 30).

A similar question was raised by Bakalla: if, for the sake of argument, a dialect of Arabic were used for both written and oral expression, which dialect should be chosen? He emphasises that the Arabic *fushḥa* is a form widely accepted by all Arab people (Bakalla 1980 : 87).

In his strong criticism of the use of the colloquial, Al-Haj stated that though we agree that Arabic grammar suffers from many problems, that does not mean we must get rid of Arabic grammar and replace it with colloquial usage (Al-Haj 1978 : 232) It has to be borne in mind that the simplification of the language is not a philosophical issue. The confusion between the two issues has led some educators away from the correct path (ibid : 250).

It can be seen in the light of analysing the views of the scholars who either called for the elimination of or for the adoption of the colloquial, that although their aim was to simplify Arabic grammar for students of the Arabic language, they did not confine

their efforts to simplifying the presentation of Arabic grammar. They also addressed the very crucial issue which was for reforming of the language itself. In fact, it is very difficult to separate these two issues. Those scholars also did not overlook the religious, social and political factors which made their proposals unacceptable to the majority of other scholars and educators.

5.3.4 Moderate voices

In addition to the two traditional trends, the first which calls for keeping grammar teaching as it was in the past and fighting any attempt to simplify it, and the second which calls for change, paying no attention to the unchangeable foundations of grammar, a third trend appeared which was moderate and cautious. This called for keeping the unchangeable origins of Arabic and its grammar, and, at the same time, for adopting modern techniques and contemporary educational theories in grammar teaching in the hope that the grammar class might achieve its functional goals.

One distinct technique proposed by their third group was to select classical Arabic vocabularies found in the colloquial, of which there are many, in order to narrow the gap between the classical and colloquial languages and to teach them words that simplify the language for them and also help the public to read. This trend would serve classical Arabic and grammar. It is not good for classical Arabic to be so isolated from the colloquial, as colloquial words are by nature national developments woven out of Arab threads and polished by Arab tongues (Younis, and Al-Naqah , 1977 : 26).

Mahmoud Taymour has stated that researchers have adopted various techniques for simplifying grammar: some were exaggerated while others were careless. He

believes that there is no way to dispense with grammar as it is one of the fundamentals of the language. If we abandon grammar it would mean that we are destroying a main cornerstone in the structure of the language. He added that we should review many grammar rules and select and keep the essential ones. In doing so, we can abide by the good example set by ancient grammarians while we seek to simplify grammar rules as much as possible and delete whatever rules that do not cope with the modern development of the language (Birani 1972 : 105).

There are others who called for teaching grammar in the primary stage by training students to use what the general grammatical rules aim at without referring to grammatical terms. This means that they aim to correct the mistakes in the student's expression based on organised rules in the teacher's mind without the need to mention grammatical rules to students (Al-Husaini 1980 : 42). This trend - though opposed by many linguists - is a bold attempt to simplify teaching this difficult subject. It avoids mention of the foundations upon which ancient and modern grammarians are agreed and it does not call for the abolition of grammar but seeks only to reach the desired goal of grammar teaching.

5.4 The influence of simplification efforts

Following this detailed presentation of attempts to simplify grammar for Arabic students, a question arises about the effect of such attempts on the practical side of grammar teaching and on the syllabuses of teaching Arabic rules. The question is : did such attempts help overcome the difficulties of grammatical rules about which both students and teachers complained ?

A very small number of such attempts at simplifying grammar have affected practice. One of these attempts - as previously mentioned - was that of Ibrahim Mustafa which was very controversial. Yet as a result, a committee for simplifying Arabic grammar was set up of which Mustafa was a member. This Committee introduced some proposals to the Ministry of Education, but carrying them out created some obstacles and evoked hesitation and fear because it is not easy for one to abandon what is familiar or habitual. The Committee therefore recommended to the Ministry that the proposals should be considered carefully before they were implemented and that teachers should be given ample opportunity to familiarise themselves with the proposals before putting them into practice in the classroom.

Another attempt at practical effectiveness was that of the Arabic Inspector Conference in 1957 where they adopted a new educational technique in grammar which was suggested to re-classify and integrate the grammatical components and terms as much as possible in order to enable the students to feel the need to study and understand these components. This technique was adhered to by the common syllabus setters in Egypt, Syria and Jordan in preparatory schools. But these countries soon abandoned that new technique pointing out that there were many short-comings (Al-Sayed 1987 : 52).

Mustafa Mousa holds that these attempts have added a new dimension to grammar study and that, as a result, we have books and researches on grammar simplification, such as *'Annaḥw 'Atwādiḥ* by Ali Al-Garim and Mustafa Amin, *'Ihya' 'Annaḥw* by Ibrahim Mustafa, *Annaḥw 'Aljadīd* by Abdul Muta'al El-Se'edy and other books that are characterised, according to Mousa, by the fact that

they do not spoil or abandon the fundamentals of grammar (Mousa 1985 : 125)

Unlike Mustafa Mousa, Mahmoud Khatir argues that attempts at grammar simplification in academic books did not introduce anything new to revive the strength and liveliness of the grammar class. They did not provide a corrective to earlier errors, or a new syllabus, as the rules are the same, and even their examples were only slightly changed (Al-Husaini 1980 : 46).

But, Ali El-Nagdy Nasif believes that grammar has been greatly simplified and that this has resulted in fruitful outcomes. He said:

I believe that going again to simplify grammar and listening to changing it as time goes on are fruitless and useless; they are obstacles in the way of grammar and certainly are considered a waste of time (Nasif 1957: 125).

It is true, in my view, that these attempts at the simplification of grammar have had some effect and should not be ignored. However, they have not succeeded in solving the problem and grammar remains a source of repeated complaints.

One of the reasons for the failure of these attempts was that they were not objective and were not scientifically based on experiment. As a result we do not know whether these new methods will help students to like grammar or whether they will achieve the aim of teaching grammar at the various academic grades.

One of the shortcomings of these attempts was that they ignored the educational aspect of the language teaching process and did not pay much attention to

arranging and selecting grammar materials or to the basic needs of learners at different educational stages.

5.5 Academic efforts

Besides the efforts to simplify the Arabic grammar in order to make it more suitable for students to learn and consequently improve their ability to read, write, speak and understand, there have been also some academic researches which have been part of this effort and aim at the same goals. I am going to review general studies on teaching and learning grammar and more specifically I will focus on research which has analysed the students' grammatical errors.

5.5.1 General studies on grammar

In a study that is considered one of the earliest empirical studies in Arabic, Salah El-Din Mijawer (1956) investigated the conjunctions in arabic and the ability of preparatory school students to use them. Although the research focused on the weakness of students in using conjunctions, the researcher also looked at the weakness of the students' powers of expression, particularly when they moved from one idea to another or wished to form connections. When attempting this they frequently used conjunctions that failed to express what they are aiming to say.

The researcher used an experimental technique and conducted two experiments. The first one aimed at finding out which conjunctions are suitable for preparatory school students in Egypt and then distributed the suitable conjunctions for each grade. Based on this, a syllabus of grammar can be set which introduces suitable conjunctions for each grade. The second experiment aimed to discover the effect of

conjunctions on the expressions of students who have been taught conjunctions, not on *'icrāb* basis but rather on the function of these conjunctions within sentences

Mijawer arrived at a set of conjunctions upon which a syllabus of grammar can be based for each stage. Then, he distributed the conjunctions to the four years according to two principles: the first was the easiness and difficulty of each conjunction. A conjunction to which 60% of the students give the correct answer is considered a suitable conjunction for that academic year; the second principle was the relation between expression and how conjunctions are common within such expression.

Fakhr El-Din Al-Qulla (1968) conducted an experiment where the experimental group was confined to teaching through the program prepared by the researcher whereas the control group used more traditional methods. After executing the program, a final test was given to measure students' acquisition. It turned out that there was no significant difference between the control and experimental groups.

The adopted program performed better than the traditional way in the grammatical components that depend on repetition, such as forming the passive verb and the relative pronoun. However, the traditional performed better in changing the sound feminine plural *jamc mu'anath alsālim* to the sound masculine plural *jamc muthakar alsalim*.

In a survey supervised by the Educational and Psychological Researches Centre in Baghdad University, Jawad Al-Touma (1971) examined the problems of teaching

Arabic in the secondary stage and asked the following question: do you agree with the opinion that the difficulty of grammar in our schools arises because the grammatical components included in the syllabus are difficult for students to understand? He found that 77.6% of the answers were "Yes". It is noticeable in this survey that no branch of Arabic other than grammar was paid such great deal of attention by teachers. The number of teachers who presented suggestions about teaching grammar in their answers was 40 out of 95.

In 1974, Salah Mijawer conducted an experimental study to determine the language skills in the branches of Arabic in the primary, preparatory and secondary stages in Kuwaiti schools. The researcher conducted a survey on the skills in each branch of Arabic at each stage. He held interviews with 100 male teachers and 50 female teachers. The results regarding the secondary school showed that the skills at this stage are:

- . Knowing the sentence position and its relation to the sentences before and after it
- . Vowelizing words endings *'icrāb*, whether verbal or written
- . Understanding the difference between inflection *'icrāb* and declension *bina'*
- . Sound Expression

The common skills among the students of the preparatory and secondary stages in grammar were:-

- (a) Elicitation *'istinbāṭ* and deduction *'istikhrāj*
- (b) Understanding logical relations
- (c) Understanding relation and correct expression
- (d) Ability to use conjunctions.

Hashim Elayan (1978) conducted a study to measure acquisition of grammar by Arabic students in male and female teachers institutes in Jordan. He also examined the relation between the acquisition of grammar and differences of gender and the general academic achievement in three levels (high-medium-low) as appeared in the examinations of the general secondary stage certificate. The researcher applied a test for measuring students' acquisition. This test was divided into two parts; the first one was about inflection *'icrāb* and the second was about structures *tarākīb*. Educational objectives of this test were defined in the light of Bloom's classification. This study concluded that the aim of grammar teaching in those institutes was not attained. The study also showed that the acquisition by Arabic specialists was greatly affected by their general academic attainment on the one hand, and by the gender factor on the other.

Considered to be the only experimental research which has been conducted to compare the methods of teaching Arabic grammar, Al-Sayed's (1969) study focused on second grade of intermediate schools in Egypt. His sample consisted of three hundred students divided into three groups in three schools. He applied the three following methods: the first one is the deductive method which was based on teaching grammatical rules, giving some examples and questions which illustrate these rules and finally giving the students sentences on which they are trained on the application of grammatical rules. The second method is the inductive method which is

a form of inquiry-behaviour. Learning theory tells us that inquiry-behaviour is as important for the student as for the professional scientist. In a language arts class, inductive learning requires students to ask questions, observe, gather data, classify, generalise and verify in matters of language (Hodson 1978 : 50).

The third method in Al-Sayed's experiment is the complementary text method. With the guidance of the teacher, students extract from the text the examples which contain the grammatical rules. The teacher then draws the attention of the students to the similarities between the grammatical examples in order to derive the rules from the examples. Then, exercises are offered to train the students to extract the rules. The first group was taught by the deductive method, the second group was taught by the inductive method and the third one was taught by the complementary text method. The results of this experiment revealed that the deductive method was slightly more effective in achieving idiomatic and linguistic acquisitions.

I think that there is a flaw in the way the experiments were conducted, because it is not acceptable from the educational point of view that the deductive method should be more effective than the other two methods. The deductive method is adopted by most of the Arabic countries and yet students' level of grammar is still low. Therefore, it is not suitable to construct a grammar curriculum based upon the finding of this experiment. Another experiment needs to be conducted to validate or invalidate this conclusion.

Badri, in 1979, conducted a study aimed at identifying the factors which affect Arabic language teaching in Iraq at the intermediate stage. A two section questionnaire was given to language teachers. The first section was concerned with the language teaching situation, the other one was concerned with measuring the teachers' attitudes and the objectives of language teaching, in terms of their importance and achievement

Badri then tested reading and writing skills to establish the lack of language skills and elicit causes of errors in reading and writing. Finally, he analysed the content of questions given in the reading text books to establish their value in helping the pupils to acquire language in general and reading skills in particular.

The results of the study showed that there was a real problem regarding basic language skills among the students. Three factors were responsible for the problem: (1) teachers, (2) syllabus content and teaching facilities and (3) the pupils' linguistic background.

In 1981, Hamdan Nasr investigated the correlation between students' attitudes towards Arabic and their cognitive achievement of Arabic syntax and language comprehension. A random sample of 1264 academic and commercial first secondary students (boys and girls) in Egypt was selected. Nasr measured the students' attitudes towards language by utilising a special attitudinal scale.

The study revealed that significant differences existed between average achievement in subjects on all grammar tests which could be attributed to sex and attitude towards the Arabic language. The study also showed that there is no significant difference between students' mean scores on all language comprehension tests which can be attributed to attitude and sex. Finally, the study revealed that scores of subjects of both sexes on the grammar and the language comprehension tests tended to increase as their attitudes toward the Arabic language increased from low to medium to high.

In order to discover how much students had learnt after eight years of grammar study during the grades of the three stages (primary, preparatory and secondary) in the official schools in Damascus (Syria), Nazira Masri, in 1981, conducted a study in which she tested vowelization of a literary text, inflection (*icrab*) and literary expression. She also distributed a questionnaire addressed to students and teachers and conducted an interview with some educational supervisors.

The results of this study showed that the objectives of grammar teaching were not attained. The results also showed that the acquisition of both male and female students of the science section performed better in the vowelization of the literary text and in the literary expression. Furthermore, the results showed that the acquisition of female students was better than that of the male students in both the scientific and the literary section.

The two questionnaires and the interview revealed that students suffered from the following poor performance of Arabic language in general and grammar in particular, the prevalence of colloquial, poor teaching method, insufficient grammar syllabus and mass media's carelessness of the Arabic language (Masri 1981).

Dr. Ali Madkour (1984) administered a questionnaire in Saudi Arabia with the objective of drawing attention to the fact that setting up the Arabic grammar syllabus is based on a foundation which lacks scientific support. He tried to compare between the grammar components in the syllabus of the first prep grade and the grammar components found in the students' writings in the same stage. He also tried to

establish the foundations that should be taken into consideration when drawing up the syllabus of grammar.

To achieve this goal, he analysed a sample of the students' writings to look for grammar components in the students' composition. He then compared those components with that of grammar syllabus. The results showed some agreement between the grammatical components found in the researcher's analysis and that of the syllabus. There were, however, few components in the students' compositions that were not found in the syllabus, and vice-versa (Madkooor 1984).

Believing that the method of teaching Arabic grammar has failed to develop the faculty of language *malaka*, Dr. Ali Madkooor conducted an experiment in 1989, in which he adopted the method of Ibn Khaldon for teaching grammar. Ibn Khaldon briefly defined his theory of the method of teaching grammar saying:

when the old Arabs (during the age of eloquency) had the faculty of language they used to listen to the speech around them and to the way in which people expressed themselves and they learned from this. By listening and talking to different people, they developed their ability in the language. This is the way languages are passed from one generation to another (Ibn Khaldon. Quoted by Madkooor 1989 : 77).

Moreover, Ibn Khaldon saw that understanding rules and inflection does not create the faculty of language because they are just the code of the language. Memorising codes , rules and inflection (*icrāb*) will not create linguistic ability. He gives as an example the case of a person who knows well how to sew or how to be a good carpenter but he never practises his craft. Likewise, we have many people who

have studied grammar, its rules and theories, yet their literary expression is full of grammatical errors.

Hence, Ibn Khaldon believes that the solution of this problem is to create a good linguistic atmosphere and to provide the aids for acquiring linguistic facility. This can be achieved by memorising *kalām alcarab* the old Arab speeches which are to be found in the Holy Koran, Hadith (the Prophet's sayings) and writings of famous Arab men of letters both in poetry and prose. This will help student to express himself in the same wording and use the same linguistic techniques as the early Arabs (ibid . 80).

In order to apply Ibn Khaldon's method, Madkooor chose two classes of the first preparatory grade in two different schools giving a total of four classes and a sample of a hundred and four (104) students. He made one class of the two in each school a control group and the other an experimental group. He then selected a number of literary texts characterised by a high standard of linguistic technique. With the help of some teachers, he taught these texts to the experimental group according to Ibn Khaldon's method. The same texts were taught to the control group but in the traditional way. The experiment lasted for ten weeks, then the two groups were asked to write about one of the texts and their writings were analysed to see the effect of the experiment.

The result revealed an obvious improvement as well as a decrease of grammatical mistakes in the experimental group. This improvement was not only in grammatical mistakes but also in the decrease of dictation and hand-writing mistakes as

well. Madkour also noticed that the experimental group had improved in expressing meaning which proved the effect of the texts on their writing (Madkour 1989)

5.5.2 Studies on grammatical errors

Studying and analysing grammatical mistakes are not recent concerns but have deep roots in the history of Arabic that date back to the beginnings of the 7th century, i.e. about one hundred years after Islam, which has already been illustrated in Chapter Three.

Linguists have long been collecting, counting, classifying and correcting grammatical errors committed by the public. Their main objective was to keep the Arabic language sound and pure.

Despite our appreciation of early linguists's efforts, we have some reservations first, their search for grammatical errors did not specify which period of time these errors were found. Second, their studies did not mention specific social or geographical environments. Third, their researches depended on quotation, as ancestors relied on the efforts of predecessors by quoting from their books. Fourth, these efforts did not try to separate grammatical mistakes from other mistakes, but mixed them with inflectional, phonetic and linguistic mistakes. Fifth, these efforts did not attempt to determine the rate of these mistakes and whether they are common or not.

Researches on grammatical errors made by students were not conducted in Arab countries until the early seventies of the twentieth century. This issue will be dealt with in detail in the following pages.

In 1972, Mahmoud Al-Sayed conducted the first study of grammatical mistakes made by students in Arab countries. The principal aim of that thesis, submitted for obtaining a Ph.D., was to determine the grammatical components that should be selected in the syllabus for Arabic at the preparatory stage, based on objective principles.

Al-Sayed laid some principles that should be taken into consideration when selecting grammatical components for the syllabus of the preparatory stage, which are First, the basics of grammatical components as viewed by experts and specialists Second, language requirements for preparatory stage students. The third principle is the contemporary writings.

To implement the first principle, Al-Sayed interviewed a number of specialists in teaching Arabic: university professors, inspectors and members of the Arabic Language Assembly in Cairo. The second was implemented by collecting samples of students' oral and written expressions in the three grades of the preparatory stage (boys and girls). Al-Sayed asked students to write on five topics for written expression (composition) and to talk about five topics for oral expression. He counted the grammatical constructions used by the students and calculated the percentage rate of their repetition. Then, he also wrote down the mistakes they made in grammar and calculated their rate of repetition. The third principle was implemented by analysing a sample of the writings of contemporary authors in different fields of knowledge. He noted the frequency of grammatical components found in these writings.

The research also covered the grammatical difficulties faced by staff members of the government's ministries and institutions who had obtained preparatory, secondary and university certificates. Reading, listening, oral and written expression of these employees were examined to find out about the types of difficulties they were facing

As a result of these investigations Al-Sayed arrived at a set of grammatical components that should be incorporated into ^{the} syllabus of Arabic at the preparatory stage. Then he distributed these components among the three grades of the preparatory stage based on frequency percentage of such components. He also made a critical comparison between the proposed syllabus and the one applied in Egypt in the academic year 1971 highlighting points of similarity and points of difference between the two (Al-Sayed 1972).

Mahmoud Al-Sayed's thesis is considered to be one of the pioneering research efforts on teaching grammar and in the analysis of common grammatical errors in the Arab countries. I observe, however, that Al-Sayed confined the research's statistical method to calculating the percentage of grammatical mistakes which only determines the degree or intensity of mistakes in the study. He did not determine the percentage of the students who made these errors (see Chapter Six for more details about the method I followed in analysing students' writing).

In 1976, Mohammed Hamdan conducted a study aiming to discover the common mistakes in Arabic grammar among the students of the third preparatory stage in Jordan. The sample was selected from governmental and private schools and schools affiliated to the Relief Agency.

Hamdan used two instruments in his study. The first one was the answer papers of the tests conducted by Jordanian schools at the end of the school year. He analysed the papers of that test. The second instrument was an objective test which included all functional components in Arabic grammar that were studied by the students in the previous years. That test contained thirty-five questions using the Multiple Choice System.

The results of this study were the subordination *altawābic* which had the highest rate of error at 54%; numbers 52%, *nwāsikh* 49%, the verb 48%, followed respectively by nouns and verbs in the case of *naṣb* 37%, then nouns and verbs in the case of *rafʿ* 31% and finally the least percentage was the genitive construction *ʿidāfa* 30%.

Hamdan study concluded that students in the schools of Jordan, like their counterparts in other Arab countries, suffer from weakness in their use of Arabic grammar (Hamdan 1976).

Despite the good quality of this study and the importance of its results, I notice that Hamdan relied on an objective test which he described that it focused on the functional aspects of grammar. That was not, in my opinion, a precise description as the questions in his test, multiple choice for example, refer to the answer. In addition, the objective test does not address the language in its natural form as practised in daily life.

We also notice that this study relied on the students' answers in the tests, but it did not specify what was analysed. Were the answer papers taken from all taught subjects namely history test, branches of Arabic language test, Islamic education test, geography test etc or were these answers taken only from composition test? In addition the study ignored the effect of examination on students' psychology which will be explained in Chapter Six.

In Saudi Arabia, Al-Shekhesheer's thesis (1978) is considered to be the first empirical study about grammatical errors among primary stage students. For this research, he prepared an objective test to analyse common grammatical errors and the degree of difficulty posed by grammar. The test consisted of four questions. The first was concerned with the noun clause *jumla 'ismiyyā* and verb clause *jumla fi'liyyā* and students were asked to construct a sentence by combining two phrases. The second question consists of two parts, case endings *'icrāb* and morphology *ṣarf*. The third question seeks to reveal the student's ability to recognise conjunction *catf*, adjectives *nact* and adverbs of time and place *dharf zaman* and *dharf makan*. The fourth question is about definite and indefinite articles *nakira* and *macriifa*.

Al-Shekhesheer also analysed common grammatical mistakes he found in written composition. He chose a sample of 200 pupils from the sixth grade of the primary stage in Makkah city.

The results of this study showed that the percentage of errors in *icrab* case endings was more than those in morphology and the least percentage of mistakes was

in recognising subjects' construction. In *icrāb* the five verbs mistakes were 87% and in recognising the noun clause mistakes were 20%.

Finally, a comparison was made between the results of the questionnaire directed to teachers and senior teachers of Arabic and the results of the test. He concluded that the highest percentage of mistakes in both the questionnaire and the test was in the five verbs, the dual, the causative objects and pronouns (Al-Shekhshsheer 1978).

In 1980, Awatif Al-Husaini conducted a study of common grammatical mistakes in the writings of the third preparatory grade female students in Jeddah city in Saudi Arabia. She analysed the writings of a sample of 230 students. The results showed that 95.6% of students made mistakes and only 4.3% of the sample did not commit errors.

Out of twenty one basic grammatical components (see Table No.7.7), students made mistakes when using 19 components i.e. with a percentage of 90.4%. For instance, the study revealed that a high percentage of mistakes was common in five basic components: preposition 52%, pronouns 40%, gender 32% and the object 30%.

To discover if the level of the third preparatory female students improved, Awatif Al-Husaini analysed the writings of the first year secondary school students and made a comparison between the two grades. She noticed that grammatical errors in some grammatical components were more common in the first grade of secondary stage than in the third grade of preparatory stage. Al-Husaini explains this phenomenon by reference to the fact that:

a student in the first secondary grade has improved her linguistic ability by using the basic grammatical components more comprehensively. This led to the increase in frequency of mistakes as the more use is made of the language, the more mistakes she will make (Al-Husaini 1980 :151).

Al-Husaini noticed also that most female students write in a poor style using loose phrases and weak expressions full of colloquial Arabic.

Dr. Mahmoud Kamel Al-Naqah (1981) cares for students specialised in Arabic language at university level for these students will be teachers for all educational stages. He conducted a study of grammatical mistakes in the written composition by third year students in Arabic Department in 1981. That study also aimed at finding out the most common mistakes and the possible causes in addition to assessing the possibility of remedy.

The sample numbered 70 male and female students. After obtaining all the students' written work, he began identifying, analysing and classifying the mistakes. This study revealed a high percentage of students who committed errors (84.3%). Without doubt, this percentage is an indication of the severe linguistic weakness of the students specialised in Arabic language.

The study showed that students made errors in using thirteen (13) components out of twenty one (21) of the basic grammatical components, with a ratio of 64.3%.

The good characteristic of this research is that it precisely describes the actual grammatical mistakes. This helps in finding out the reasons for the mistakes and, consequently, in making a plan for tackling them. Nevertheless, this research was confined to analysing the students' answer papers of the final examinations which in my

view may affect the students' writings for two reasons: firstly fear and worry of the final examination and secondly pressure to finish the answer in the examination during the prescribed time.

The recommendation of research was that the remedial action should start in the first year of university to tackle the weakness and mistakes in grammar which the students had picked up during their general education; elementary, intermediate and secondary stages.

Most M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations on the analysis of grammatical mistakes in Egypt were about the grammatical errors made by students at different stages. Ahmad Elayan (1984) shifted the attention and concentrated in his thesis on the grammatical mistakes committed by teachers when teaching grammar in the primary stage. He used four instruments, the first of which was questionnaires directed to Arabic teachers in order to find out their mistakes while teaching grammar. The second instrument was a subjective test conducted for the primary stage pupils so as to measure their ability to apply what they understood. Direct observation of teachers and pupils during his visits to schools was his third instrument. The fourth one was what he called "informal interviews" for discovering the common mistakes in teaching grammar and their causes.

Ahmad Elayan's study revealed that: 65% of the teachers were not fully aware of the methods of teaching grammar; 75% depend for teaching grammar on the recitation method; and 24% hate teaching grammar and find it difficult.

Elayan noted that the syllabus was set by senior teachers in a way that does not meet the pupils' needs or accommodate their level of cognitive development. He also observed that the syllabus lacks examples, pictures and drills.

As to mistakes committed by pupils themselves, the fourth grade made mistakes in *jumal mufīdah* meaningful sentences, the singular, the dual and the plural. The fifth grade made mistakes in identifying pronouns, the indefinite and the definite. The sixth grade pupils made mistakes in the sound masculine plural, *'inna* and its sisters and *kana* and its sisters.

The criticism of this thesis is that it mixes issues like errors of teachers when teaching grammar, methodology, syllabus and students' errors. Instead of probing in several different directions, Elayan should perhaps have concentrated on the grammatical mistakes of teachers. Moreover, he did not determine the types of common grammatical components but confined himself to showing the grammatical components which manifested incomplete analysis.

Mustafa Mousa (1985) felt that it was important to look and dig deeply into the crisis of teaching grammar:

Faculties of Education are responsible for graduating qualified teachers. Researches have been done to evaluate the Arabic language students at the Faculties of Education and the results revealed the students' weaknesses in acquiring grammatical concepts and grammatical errors in their writing. (p.328)

He thought that the students of the Arabic language at the Faculty of Education should graduate with a minimum of errors in order to achieve effectiveness in teaching

grammar. He therefore conducted a study investigating grammatical errors of the fourth year students in Arabic departments of some faculties of education in Egypt.

Results showed that the grammatical errors were as follows: *maf'ūl bih* 74%, *kana* and its sisters 68%, adjective 62%, *'inna* and its sisters 54%, the inflection of the verb 52%, dual 46.6%, condition style 37.3% and number 28.6%. The results also showed that there were some statistical differences at the 01 level of confidence between the averages for girls and boys. Girls committed more errors than boys in writing and adjusting. He also found that students who graduated from public secondary schools committed more errors than those who graduated from teaching institutions (Mousa 1985).

In his study entitled Developing the syllabuses of grammar rules and expression techniques in general education stages in the Arab Homeland, Mahmoud Al-Sayed conducted an extensive study which contained three main steps. The first was to analyse the grammar syllabuses in the Arab countries. He conducted an investigation on grammatical components in each stage of the public education; to find out about the components which are taught at all three stages i.e. elementary, intermediate and secondary stages, or taught at two stages or if these components are taught at only one stage (Al-Sayed 1987 :72).

The second step was to analyse the grammatical mistakes committed by students in public education stages. Al-Sayed confined this study to two Arab countries, namely, Egypt and Syria. One of the advantages of this research over other researches on

grammatical errors is that it was not restricted to written composition but it also analysed students' oral expressions.

The third step was analysing the common grammatical components in contemporary and older authors' writings. Al-Sayed selected this type of analysis in response to a call to confine teaching grammatical components to what is used in every day life. He selected writings on different topics, such as general education, philosophy, religious studies, social sciences and languages.

The most important result of this study was that the grammar syllabus in most Arab schools did not include enough linguistic training in such skills as conversation, listening, reading and writing. The same applies to those aspects of grammar covered in phonetics and morphology. The study showed that the share of grammar in the academic plans in the primary stage was 25% of the prescribed time for the Arabic language, whereas in the preparatory stage the share fluctuated between 25% and 33%. In the secondary stage the share of grammar showed greater variation, for instance in Jordan it was 40%, whereas in Tunisia it was 10%. The rest of the Arab countries were between those two percentages.

As for the analysis of the oral and written compositions, the results showed that all students in all stages made mistakes in grammar and the difference in percentage was sometimes due to the academic stage, the different nationalities or, the gender factor.

Al-Sayed presented a detailed survey of the grammatical components found in contemporary authors' writings in various areas. This formed an aid for revising the current syllabuses (ibid :1987).

This study is deservedly considered one of the most distinguished studies in the field of teaching grammar and analysing mistakes, due both to the depth of its analysis and the breadth of its coverage. However a few criticisms can be made.

First, Al-Sayed's study was restricted to Egypt and Syria while the results were generalised to all Arab countries. Scientifically speaking, this is unacceptable, as each country has different social and educational backgrounds which undoubtedly affect the validity of the results.

Another criticism is that he neglected the time factor. Al-Sayed conducted the study in Egypt in 1970, then he conducted similar study in Syria in 1982. In my view, time factor should be taken into consideration before any generalisation can be made.

As for the results of the questionnaire that he distributed for analysing the aims of grammar curriculum, some of answers are astonishing and disappointing. There are some aims that are of great importance, yet most countries discounted them. For instance, this aim of "developing the student's ability to have a precise understanding of what he listens to" (Al-Sayed 1987 :86) is not one of the aims of teaching grammar for the nine countries, to which he sent his questionnaires to with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Another very essential aim is "getting the student accustomed to

precise observation and differentiation between what is wrong and what is right in what he listens to or reads” is not one of the aims for the grammar syllabus in nine countries except for Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Also, avoidance of mistakes in speaking, reading or writing is not an objective of the grammar syllabus for two stages in nine countries except Saudi Arabia and Iraq (ibid : 86).

Al-Sayed’s study has, in my view, another flaw. His method of analysis was confined to investigating only the grammatical errors, whereas the recent move tends towards analysing the whole writings of students in order to discover both the frequency of usage of grammatical components and frequency of grammatical errors. Frequency of both usage and mistakes should be taken into consideration before the teaching programme for the academic year is drawn up.

One of the negative outcomes of the method of confining the analysis to common mistakes is that the study gives a false picture of the ability to use certain grammatical components which are known to cause difficulty, for example, the adverb does not feature as common sources of error. Yet, Al-Sayed included the adverb among the components where mistakes were made rarely (Al-Sayed 1987 Table No 30 .204)

He has confessed to this mistake indirectly when he says:

As for components of section (D) where mistakes were less than 1%, this percentage does not prove that students are perfect at those components, but possibly because they are rarely used in the students’ writings and a true judgement is only possible in the light of the usage frequency of the grammar component itself. (ibid : 198)

Qinawi in 1990 conducted a study on the common grammatical errors in the language and its grammatical use in the phrases written in university theses. He aimed also to find out:

...how these errors vary from one student to another according to the different specialisations of the student art, science or literature? (Qinawi 1990 : 11)

In order to answer these questions Qinawi set out criteria for recognising errors based on the Arabic Language Authority decisions. He then analysed the grammatical and syntactical errors and classified them.

The results of the study showed that grammatical errors were common among students. The average number of students who made these errors was 95%. The highest average of the grammatical components which the students committed errors in, were as follows: *inna* and its sisters 95%, the verb and the propositions 80%, the conjunction and the condition *shart* 75%; *kāna* and its sisters, the object and *attamyiz* were 70%. The lowest averages were in the following components: noun and predicate 10%, the adverb and the subject *fācil* and the adjective 5%, *tawkeed* and *mafcul li ajlih* 5%.

Although this study is unique in its nature and no research has been conducted in analysing the language of M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations as far as I know, selecting these dissertations is a faulty method because, firstly, they contain a quantity of other authors' and researchers' quotations and secondly no one can be certain about the nature of the writing of these researches as they may have been edited and corrected by editors as many M.A. and Ph.D. theses are. In addition, the number of theses selected is questionable since he chose only four among hundreds of dissertations which have been submitted in Egyptian universities. It would have been a better method if he had chosen

the introduction and the conclusions of an acceptable number of theses rather than concentrating on four only.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The complaints raised as to the difficulty of learning the grammar of the Arabic language, discussed in Chapter Four, have provoked various reactions, some of which could be called extremist in nature, while others have been more liberal and tolerant. Three main schools of thought may be identified. The first group wishes to stop all efforts to teach Arabic grammar. The second suggests changing from teaching classical Arabic to teaching colloquial (slang) Arabic. The third party argues that it does not matter whether the correct grammar is used as, although classical Arabic is the language of the Holy Koran, the Koran itself does not stipulate that its grammar must be learned, so it is not to be seen as a holy matter. This third party of educators suggests that the language could be simplified and made more accessible to learners by avoiding unnecessary detail in writing, understanding, and pronunciation. In this chapter, these differing points of view have been discussed in some depth, noting the positive and useful aspects as well as pointing out aspects which could weaken the Arabic language.

The present study is not one of those which seek to evade the problem by attempting to simplify Arabic grammar. Rather, it is a serious attempt grounded in experiment, at solving the problem of teaching Arabic grammar, through the application of the theory of error analysis.

The methodology adopted in the empirical part of this study, i.e. the instruments used, the sample and the methods of statistical analysis adopted, are outlined in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Methods and Procedures of the Study

Chapter Six

Methods and Procedures of the Study

6.1 Preface

The previous chapters have served to set the context of the study; chapter one was a general introduction, which, among other things, outlined the purpose of the study, the issues involved and the factors motivating the researcher.

The present chapter sets out and seeks to justify the research design employed to analyse the grammatical errors of Saudi high school students. It also considers the factors implicated in that design and the circumstances under which the field work was conducted. It thus prepares the ground for Chapter Seven which discusses the data generated by the field research. The present Chapter presents the following major aspects of the methodology used in this study:

the purpose of the study

the grammatical errors: their determination and the stages of their analysis

pilot study

the instrument used for the data collection

sampling method

the study's criteria for incorrection

administration of the test

statistical procedure

errors categories

6.2 The purpose of the study

As has been previously stated, the purpose of the study is to analyse grammatical errors in the written work of Saudi high school students in Riyadh province. The analysis was to enable conclusions to be drawn and recommendations made that would assist policy and decision makers in the Saudi Ministry of Education and other parties involved in curriculum and syllabus setting. The study was conducted through the study of creative writing. The method chosen as most appropriate for the study is the descriptive survey. As Fox (1969) has stated: "The rationale for the purely descriptive survey is the fact that the information provided is in itself the answer to the research question posed". In other words, the main problem of the study can be identified in the form of questions which the study will then try to answer.

In the present investigation, questions have been derived from the following: previous related literature, previous related studies, related documents and the Researcher's own experience

Borg and Gall (1981) have identified some advantages of the descriptive method. They argue: (a) it can provide cause-and-effect evidence, (b) a random sample can often be selected, (c) the investigator can be quite sure that the obtained results are bias-free and (d) it gives better information on complex human behaviour compared with other methods.

6.3 Observing homogeneity in the data

In order to have the corpus of written work as homogeneous as possible, I ensured that the groups of students to whom the test was to be administered had the following characteristics:

1. All were native speakers of Arabic - those who have been in the country for more

than ten years are considered as native speakers

2. All had followed the syllabus and courses of the elementary, intermediate and high school levels in Saudi Schools.
3. Every precaution was taken into consideration when selecting the sample from Riyadh area (see 6.8 and 6.9 in this chapter).

6.4 Determination of errors

I make no attempt in this thesis to distinguish between lapses and mistakes - what Corder (1967) calls performance errors, which are by their very nature unsystematic - and errors which in Corder's terms, are systematic and reflect the learner's lack of knowledge of the target language rules i.e. competence errors. This is not in any way intended to belittle the important distinction drawn between performance errors on one hand and competence errors, on the other. One obvious reason for not pursuing this distinction is that "it may not always be easy to distinguish such lapses, slips and mistakes of performance from errors arising from an imperfect competence in the target language" (Corder, 1974 : 123). Moreover, Corder (1967:167) has emphasised the point that : "the problem of determining what is a learner's mistake and what a learner's error is one of some difficulty and involves a much more sophisticated study and analysis of errors than is usually accorded them". This is especially so in the learner's absence, which is the case in this research. My use of the term error will therefore be understood to mean any deviation from the norms of the target language on the grammatical and lexical levels, no matter what factors lie behind such a deviation.

6.5 Stages of the analysis of errors

The division of the analysis of errors into different stages has been developed by Corder (1973 : 126). He calls these stages: recognition, description and explanation. However, for the

purposes of this research, an additional stage, not dealt with by Corder, is necessary. This is **classification**. We therefore have four stages in our analysis: **recognition, classification, correction and explanation**.

6.5.1 Recognition

The central problem for this stage is to clarify what constitutes an error. It is not always obvious whether an utterance is erroneous or well-formed, as utterances may be covertly erroneous. In discussing what constitutes a grammatical error, however, the first word that may come to our mind is grammaticality: an erroneous form is that which is ungrammatical. But it is accepted that the learner's utterance may be grammatical but unacceptable in the context in which it is used. So grammaticality and acceptability or appropriateness need to be combined in determining whether an utterance is erroneous or not. The question of acceptability is relative to context and situation. An expression may be acceptable in one context and situation yet unacceptable in another. (There are more details on this in the next pages).

The grammatical standards followed in the present study are basically those of Arabic grammatical rules found in the grammar text books assigned for the three year high school stage. The rules were derived from *Qatr 'Annada Wa Ball 'Aṣṣadā* by Ibn Hisham Al-Ansary (n.d), which contains all the grammatical rules that have been agreed upon.

Grammatical errors are more obvious; we say a learner has or has not broken the rule. In the case of lexis, it is a question of degree. Acceptability is judged on the grounds of either semantic acceptability - which depends on the analyst making a correct interpretation of what the intended meaning is - or normal context. Where the learner uses an item that is meaningful and interpretable, has the learner used it in an appropriate and normal context ? i e a

context in which a given utterance is accepted by a competent speaker of classical Arabic without question. Faced with the utterance:

Ṣadiqi'ishatra li ḥuzmata worūd
My friend bought me a bundle of flowers

a competent speaker of Arabic would most probably say *baqat worūd*: which would more acceptable in the context were it not for the fact that the utterance is acceptable in the context of a person buying a large quantity of flowers for his friend, for example, to resell. The context in which bundle is used is therefore not normal and the utterance would be regarded as erroneous (a way of resolving this is by asking the student to explain what he meant). This example:

Sadiqi'ishatrā li ḥuzmata ḥatab
My friend bought a bundle of wood

is almost certain to be accepted as it stands, without question.

So a lexical error is made when the use of a lexical item causes a competent speaker to search for a context in which an utterance will become acceptable, or when the lexical item used is not the one that would be chosen by competent speakers.

6.5.2 Classification of errors

For an analysis to be at all valid, we must use the right classification of errors. Classification is very closely connected with our next stage, that of correction, but we do need to identify and classify the errors before we correct them.

Uncertainty exists in this procedure as it does in the correction stage. A given error can often be classified in two or more ways, each of which will lead to a different correction procedure. One of our students writes:

wa kāna li tḥibi nubaḥan muzcija
the wolf was shouting loudly

The problem is to say whether this is a straightforward case of (word usage) or *kānā* and its sisters, in which case, the correct form should be *uwa'un*. Errors like this one may be classified as word usage by some, while others will classify them as *kānā* and its sisters.

It is worth mentioning here that in classifying errors, we need sometimes to look beyond the obvious and investigate what we believe is the real cause of difficulty that leads to the error. This is not only a realistic way of classifying errors but gives a more reasonable and valid picture of the learner's areas of difficulty in Arabic grammar. Furthermore, it helps clarify matters when we come to the correction stage, since the classification we decide on will determine what final reconstruction we make of the learner's utterance.

6.5.3 Correction

In this section we shall deal with the processes involved in correcting students' deviant utterances. Correction as used here means taking a deviant utterance and suggesting another which conveys the intended meaning. Experience in dealing with the learners' inter-language interference i.e. *cāmī* and *fushā* (informal and formal Arabic) and knowledge of the students' background play a very important role here.

The interpretation and correction of the learner's utterance is fairly straightforward when the learner is present and can describe what he meant to say. It is in his absence that problems are more likely to occur. When a learner uses an item inappropriately, in the sense that it is not one which a competent speaker of the language would normally use in that context, the item that the teacher or researcher suggests to correct the learner's deviant utterance is chosen on the basis of situational context and consideration of the items.

Situational context we mean that when correcting utterances, we consider the background of the students and their experience of learning the target language. There are drawbacks when the learners do not have a common background or when the teacher or investigator is not familiar with it. In addition, we consider the context which is discernible from the text itself. For instance, in correcting the following utterance:

wa li 'anna 'annashīd kāna ṭawīlan faqad shannaḡa 'asmācana
And because the song was long, it pleased our ears

which was shown by a student writing about songs, the analyst is helped by the general knowledge of the context - long and boring song - and so can assume the student is referring to *'azcaja* "displeased" which is not normally described as *shannaḡa*.

With regard to the consideration of the items, we consider items actually present in the utterance with which the learner's erroneous choice has a collocational relationship. For example, in the sentence:

wa baynamā kunnā niyāman fi 'assaḡrā'ith 'ozcajana nubāḡ 'aṡhi'b
while we were sleeping in the desert, we were suddenly disturbed by the
sound of the wolf

it is the presence of wolf which makes the choice of *'uwa'* more appropriate than *nubāḡ*, which is used for dogs.

In addition to these two conditions described by Corder (1967), the teacher or researcher is normally helped by the following; firstly, the skill and information gained from the experience of correcting deviant utterances over a long period of contact with specific learners. If a teacher has been instructing a particular group of learners for a length of time, he becomes

to be familiar with a number of errors that are common to the group. The correct form is at once known because of familiarity with the error. For example, this sentence "...because he is very interesting" looks perfectly correct as it stands; the teacher who is used to correcting errors made by Saudi students will immediately become suspicious since he will realise that the student could mean "...he is very interested" as the use of interesting in place of interested is a common error. Because of this background knowledge, the teacher will examine the context in which the utterance is used to try to interpret what the learner really wants to say.

Secondly, knowledge of the two dialects may also help the teacher or researcher to correct the learner's deviant utterance. In the case of Arabic language, the informal *cāmmī* and the classical language: an experienced teacher of these two dialects has the advantage of recognising at once errors that are caused by language transfer from the informal language to the classical language and may readily be able to find the correct term. For example when analysing the following statement made by one of the students talking about his two friends:

".....*thumma sallamtū clayhim*....
then I shook a hand with them

I am assisted by my knowledge of *cāmmī* (informal) Arabic, and I know that there has been a transfer of the *cāmmī* structure *clayhim* which in classical Arabic refers to three or more people. He should have said *clayhimā*.

The correction of learners' deviant utterances is based on these clearly-stated conditions. However, this does not always mean that one and only one correction can be made to all utterances, even when all the four factors mentioned earlier, have been considered. Where there are alternative possible reconstructions, the investigator chooses the one he feels is most appropriate or maybe indicates multiple reasons for correction.

6.5.4 Explanation

This stage explains why the errors occur. Although some progress is being made in researching both native and second language acquisition and learning, explanation of errors is still largely speculative. It is, however, widely accepted that the mother tongue, which here is *cāmmī*, influences performance in the target language, *fushā*, and that consequently some errors are due to transfer from *cāmmī*. There are, of course, other sources such as cultural transfer and teacher-induced errors.

In the case of this Study the students speak the Najd dialect (*Cāmmī Najd*) which has its own distinction from other dialects of Saudi Arabian Western and Eastern regions. As Najd has not ever been controlled by foreign power due to the absence of strategic geographical or economic significance, Najd dialect has suffered less from invasion of foreign words and expressions until the sixties when the country opened its doors to the outside world. That does not necessarily mean that the Najd dialect is the purest in Saudi Arabia.

In fact the gap between Najd dialect and the classical Arabic is so wide as found in other dialects (see 4.7.5 in Chapter Four). This diglossia has led to the influence of Najd dialect on *fushā* as was revealed by this study (see Chapter Seven and Eight for further details).

6.6 Pilot study

Before embarking upon a final study, a pilot study should be carried out. This can help to improve the quality of procedures and the results of the final study as noted by Dyer (1979 : 353).

In his Dictionary of Education, Rowntree (1981) defined the pilot study as a preliminary study undertaken prior to the major study which may be intended as a feasibility study or used to modify the proposed method. Yaremko et al (1982) stated that a pilot study is a "small scale investigation that precedes a more complete research project. Its primary purpose is to determine whether certain techniques and procedures will be effective and feasible".

For the present study, the purpose of the pilot investigation was to avoid difficulties in conducting the creative writing session, to ensure the clarity of directions to teachers, to check the feasibility of a forty-minute time limit to the writing of themes, to ensure appropriateness of the topics suggested to the pupils, to assess the suitability of the tentative error categories and to ensure the clarity of the instructions given to the students. 30 students from Mahmood Al-Ghaznawi Secondary school participated in the pilot study.

The instrument of the pilot study took the form of two different kinds of writing in two different periods. The first one was a free topic where the students were asked to take five minutes to think of any topic they wished to write about. The second one was the 'directed' topic. The pupils were asked to choose one of the following two topics:

1) "Every one has a goal in his / her life; write about your goal and your personal expectations".

OR

2) "The media and its effect on our society and what the media should be in order to contribute to the prosperity of the nation".

The reason for testing students in two types of writing is to enable them to demonstrate their linguistic proficiency including usage of grammatical components. This technique was adopted by Abu Shu'ayshi (1981) and Alwan (1984) in their instrument for analysis of grammatical errors.

Before I conducted the pilot study, special papers and pens were supplied to the students - each one of them getting 4 pages and an extra pen. This was done to ensure a good result and also to ensure their participation by denying them the excuse of not having their pens and paper with them.

TABLE 6.1

The Suitability Of 40 Minute Testing Duration

Duration	No: of Students	Percentage
Upto 20 minutes	6	10%
Between 20 and 40 minutes	50	83%
After 40 minutes	4	7%
Total:	60*	100%

* The total number of students shown in this table is 60 because the Pilot sample was tested twice.

6.6.1 Time

With regard to the 40 minutes given time, about 10% of the total sample finished their writing within 20 minutes and 7% by the end of the period whereas 83% finished their writing between the aforementioned times. This indicates that the forty minutes was adequate for this investigation (see table No: 6.1). The instructions to teachers were given to three people one of whom supervised the second period of the pilot study. They were satisfied with the clarity.

6.6.2 Topics

Regarding the appropriateness of the topics, the pupils showed a great interest in both the free topic and the media. Only a few students wrote about a goal. I therefore decided that the pupils should be given only one topic as 'the directed one'. This decision meant also that a possible variable introduced by two directed topics was eliminated.

6.6.3 Analysis

As the sample of 30 students was tested twice, sixty papers were collected. Thirty papers were selected at random which represented equally the two types of creative writing. These thirty papers were, then, analysed in order to find out the grammatical components used in them as well as the grammatical errors. Every single sentence in the students' writing was read and every grammatical component was written down. A note was made whether it was correct or not and the frequencies of correct usage and incorrect usage were calculated.

6.6.4 Changes

The process of finding errors and calculating usage showed that the method of tabulating grammatical errors was suitable. The pilot study helped in making some valuable changes to the research instrument. The first change was suggested when checking the students' writings: I realised that there were certain errors which did not fit into the error categories list, although they are considered grammatical errors in the Arabic language. These included using foreign words, slang, insertion of unnecessary words etc. The researcher found it necessary to include them in a main category called "General Linguistic Errors". Second, two categories were added to the list: *badal* (apposition) and *mafcūl muṭlaq* (absolute object). Initially, I thought that these two categories would be used rarely by the students, but the pilot study revealed that they were used quite often.

In the pilot study, I adopted Al-Husaini's study (1980) in classifying *mu'anath* and *muthakkar* (gender) as an independent grammatical component which proved to be inappropriate because gender can be found under other grammatical components such as

'ism mawṣūl and *alhāil*, therefore, gender was transferred from a main grammatical component to a sub-component (type of error).

6.6.5 Results

The analysis of the sample writing revealed that the students participating in the pilot study did commit many grammatical errors as illustrated in Table 6.2 and Table 6.3

Table 6.2
Results of the Pilot Study - Frequency of Grammatical Errors

Sequence	Types of Errors	No: of Students	Percentage %
1	<i>hurūf' aljarr</i> (prepositions)	16	53.3
2	<i>maf'cūl bih</i> (object)	12	40
3	<i>fi'cl</i> (verb)	11	36.6
4	<i>nact</i> (adjective)	9	30
5	<i>kana</i> and its sisters	9	30
6	<i>'idāfah</i> (construct chain)	8	26.6
7	<i>'inna</i> and its sisters	7	23.3
8	<i>mubtada</i> and <i>khavar</i> (topic and comment)	7	23.3
9	<i>fācil</i> (actor)	7	23.3
10	<i>'ism mawṣūl</i> (relative pronoun)	5	16.6
11	<i>caṭf</i> (conjunction)	5	16.6
12	<i>ḍamīr</i> (pronoun)	5	16.6
13	<i>cadad</i> (number)	5	16.6
14	<i>alḥāl</i> (circumstantial accusative)	4	13.3
15	<i>tamyīz</i> (specificative)	4	13.3
16	<i>'asma 'alkhamsa</i> (the five nouns)	3	10
17	<i>'ism'ishārah</i> (pointer words)	3	10
18	<i>dharf</i> (adverb)	3	10
19	<i>badal</i> (apposition)	1	3.3
20	<i>maf'cūl muṭlaq</i> (absolute object)	1	3.3
21	<i>maf'cūl li 'ajlih</i> (causitive object)	1	3.3
22	<i>sharṭ</i> (conditional style)	1	3.3

(Table 6.3)

RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY
(Frequency of the general linguistic errors)

Sequence	Types of Errors	No: of Students	Percentage (%)
1	words usage	12	40
2	foreign words	10	33.3
3	slang (words)	10	33.3
4	slang (expression)	7	23.3
5	wrong translation	6	20
6	insertion of unnecessary words	4	13.3
7	double negation	3	10
8	incomplete sentence	3	10

6.6.6 Extra instructions:

The following problems were observed during the pilot study and care was taken to avoid these by expanding the instructions given to the teachers:

- (a) Explaining, in detail, the purpose of the written exercise was not appropriate. To acquaint the students with the purposes of the writing test, I had explained to them that I was doing research to obtain a Ph.D. degree. Some students asked questions about Ph.D.; what it meant, what would be done with their papers etc, and some students did not understand my explanation at all. This detailed explanation was avoided in the main study.
- (b) Some students, who tried to finish as quickly as possible, wrote in very large letters and filled only one page.
- (c) A few students included texts in their writings, such as religious texts from the Koran, the Prophet's sayings and poetry - which did not help in achieving the aims

of this investigation.

- (d) Some students wrote about topics different from the ones requested.

6.7 Instrument used for data collection : the writing test*

In designing the instrument of the study, I was guided by the works of Borg (1979) and Evans (1984). Both have given guidelines for and valuable information about the research instrument.

For instance, Evans (1984) argued that it was clearly necessary to use an appropriate method to obtain the data or information needed for a particular investigation. He stressed the need to define clearly the purpose of the instrument and to decide exactly what information or data were required.

In conformity with suggestions made by these authors Borg (1979) and Evans (1984), I conducted a search and review of the current literature on analysing students' grammatical errors. This helped to identify the various issues in the field of grammatical error particularly in Saudi Arabia, and led to the major objectives stated in Chapter One and the subsequent development of the instrument of the study. For the purpose of the study a writing test was selected as the main instrument.

* The word "testing" is here put in inverted commas as it is too strong a word for the simple collection of data from written compositions. It is in no way connected with any evaluation, but, since we are undertaking an analysis of writing ability, we use it for want of a better term.

As this research is of an exploratory nature, the idea of a diagnostic test was kept in mind i.e. the main goal of collecting and analysing the data was not to evaluate performance in Arabic grammar after a given course, but rather:

- a) to try to assess the basic level of competency in Arabic grammar of the students, and
- b) to enable the researcher to identify specific areas of weakness and difficulty so that a plan for the most appropriate teaching program could be drawn up.

Testing is regarded as a complicated but necessary process. It invites the pupils to display their knowledge or skills in an ordered form, so the results can be graded. It gives an idea of the general standard of performance which can be expected from the learner. Ingram defined the test as follows: A test is measuring device which we use when we want to compare pupils in terms of their command of a language (Ingram 1975 : 70).

As this research is involved with the secondary stage, it should be mentioned that teaching language at this stage should aim at giving the pupils chances to use the language in expressing themselves. Therefore, testing should involve two elements. Firstly, the students should be asked to construct correct sentences in communicating orally or in writing i.e. practice of the language in actual performance. Secondly, they should be able to show an ability to remember or recall the appropriate word or form in the correct place.

Testing the grammatical system of a language can be undertaken in two ways: in discreet sentences and in spontaneous usage of the language. The first one, according to Heaton, is not valid within a communicative framework as it excludes the total context in which the

grammatical system of a language operates. The second type involves the students' ability to produce correct sentences as different contexts require (Heaton 1982: 142).

In testing grammar, the instructional objectives must be clarified. If the main purpose of teaching and learning grammar is to know about the grammatical rules and about their correct usage, an adequate way of testing grammar will be assessing the learners' knowledge of grammar in objective tests. However, if the main purpose is to give the students the ability to apply grammatical rules and points in writing or speaking, then the suitable method of testing grammar is to measure the students' ability to apply these rules and points correctly in writing or speaking. In his discussion of evaluating grammar, Pooley stated that it was a process that includes a major problem which is the uncertainty of the goals of teaching grammar. The way of testing grammar depends mainly on the goals and objectives of its testing (Pooley 1957: 75).

Teaching grammar at the secondary stage should aim at giving the students the chance to use the language for expressing themselves. It should help them to understand properly what they read and hear. Teaching grammar should also assist the students to avoid errors when they read, write or speak (Ministry of Education 1988: 100).

When the students' acquisition of grammar is tested, attention must be paid to their actual performance in writing in order to assess whether they have acquired what they have been taught or not. As has been mentioned before, the present way of testing grammar depends heavily on the students' simple knowledge of grammar regardless of their ability actually to use it.

It is very important to determine what is to be tested. In fact it is pre-requisite to good testing of any kind. Writing an essay or composition is a type of language test as it assesses the learner's ability to write or to use his language to communicate through writing. As Harris pointed out, the most direct way of measuring students' writing ability is to have them write (Harris 1969 : 65).

Testing and examining students' writing face two difficulties. The first is mastering writing skills. The second is the problem of testing these skills as the writing process has many different components : content, form, grammar, style and mechanics. Naturally, the main concern of the present study is the grammar component in the writing process which involves only the grammatical errors of students in the secondary stage.

6.7.1 Types of testing

These are the types of test which I examined to find out the most suitable for the study:

. **Objective tests** test the learner's understanding of acceptability and are efficient in testing a wide range of problems to which the learner cannot evade responding as easily as he often can with essays. Oller (1979) has this to say about multiple choice tests: "they do in fact require people to make decisions that are at least similar to decisions that people are often required to make in normal communication" (p. 232). Harris confirms that "well constructed objective tests have been found to correlate quite highly with general writing ability" (Harris 1969 : 70).

In testing grammar, we must clarify the instructional objectives of grammar. If the main purpose of teaching and learning grammar is to know about the grammatical rules and about

their correct usage, then an adequate way of testing grammar will be assessing the learner's knowledge of grammar in objective tests. For this reason I have decided not to use this type of testing. In addition, one of the flaws is that the subjects do not have to think of their own answers, but merely choose from a number of possibilities.

It is not convincing to offer a wide range of choices as many researchers have suggested (see Mousa 1985 : 171, Qinawi 1990 : 70). They believe that increasing the choices to four or five can reduce the role of guessing the correct answers. However, in my belief, these choices, no matter how many times they have been increased, are not the subject's own answer and this type of test does not address the real issues in learning grammar.

. Examination papers

Some researchers have examined students' writings in the papers of the exams set by the Ministry of Education. Their argument is that (a) in this examination, students' written expression represents the final outcome of their learning of grammar, (b) that in the directions given to the setters of these examination questions, the Department of Examinations states that questions should be based upon what the students have studied and should be comprehensive in the sense that they should not be limited to some areas of what has been studied and (c) great attention is paid to this examination by all people concerned: teachers, students and parents. Thus, it is expected that students' written expression will be the best they can offer.

Although I acknowledge these advantages, I believe that the environment of the examination has a negative impact on students and consequently on their written work. There is no doubt that fear of failing the examination certainly influences the students' ability to express

themselves freely and makes them very cautious about every single word they write. For these reasons, I decided not to take examination papers for analysis.

. **Students' writing**

It was stated earlier that, when testing grammar, the instructional objective has to be clarified. If the main purpose is to give the learners an ability to apply grammatical rules and points in writing or speaking, then the best way of testing grammar is to measure the learner's ability to apply these rules and points correctly in writing or speaking. In Pooley's (1957) view, evaluating grammar is a process that faces a principal problem which is the uncertainty of the goals of teaching grammar. The way of testing grammar depends chiefly on the goals and objectives of its teaching.

When we test a student's acquisition of grammar, special attention must be paid to his actual performance in writing to be able to discover whether he acquires what he has been taught or not. If we observe the present way of testing grammar in Saudi Arabia's high schools, we find that it simply concentrates on the students' knowledge of grammar regardless of their ability actually to use it. As Masri points out "Memorisation of grammar rules or of a narrow range of facts about the syllabus can be sufficient to secure a pass" (Masri 1981 : 35).

It is an urgent need to begin in testing the students' actual performance rather than their ability to recall or recognise language materials. This was the main concern of the Sixth National Symposium on Language Teaching in Egypt in 1986. The recommendations of the working parties at this symposium paid great attention to the necessity of assessing the students'

actual performance and not only their knowledge. The following are some of their recommendations:

1. Tests which assess performance rather than passive knowledge only should be introduced.
2. Tests should probe students' ability to apply, rather than reproduce, what they have learnt.
3. Tests should assess not only memorised material, but should also test creative use of language. (Ministry of Education N.S.L.T. Conference in Egypt 1986 : p.32)

For these reasons I have chosen the students' actual performance in the form of writing as the tool for this study. It has to be borne in mind that this method is slightly different from the one previously used by other researchers, that is, the study of examination papers, which has some disadvantages as has been explained above.

With regard to choosing the topics of the test it is important to note here that the more relevant the topic is to the learner's life and experience, the easier it is for them to write about. Byrne states, "The subjects of composition must be familiar to him (the learner), drawn from his own life and experience" (Byrne 1973 : 90). In addition, the student's linguistic ability has to be taken into consideration as an important element before requesting him to write. "Students will be able to write more, and more effectively, on topics that relate to their linguistic and social background and are within their semantic repertoire" (Samadi 1986 : 35).

6.8 Sampling method

Sampling is another crucial point in any research, as research is generally conducted on the basis of a sample from which certain generalisations applicable to a relevant population may be derived (Mouly 1978). Social scientists use sampling in their research because typically they do not have the time and money to study all the cases in the population of interest to them. Through the use of samples the researcher can gather information about relatively few cases and seek to make qualified judgements about a larger number of cases (Miller 1983).

There are many methods of sample selection. The random approach was chosen here. This involves, generally, the selection of units from the whole population in such a way that the characteristics of the sample approximate the broad characteristics of the total population. The random procedure is bias-free because every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for inclusion in the sample. This means that the researcher cannot determine who should or should not be included in the sample.

This study is confined to Riyadh, the Saudi capital. It is worth pointing out that Riyadh covers some 1,600 square kilometres, an area close to the area of London in the U.K. (see the location of Riyadh Chapter Two).

6.9 The selection of schools

As there were no research data which could be used to determine the economic, social and cultural mix of the Riyadh area, I had no choice but to use common terms and describe the social status of these areas as Upper class, Middle class or Lower class. These divisions are manifest in the standard of living, the appearance of buildings, villas, shopping areas and the number of private schools in the various areas. This was the base on which the schools were

selected for the study sample. Table No: (6.4) illustrates Riyadh City's High Schools, their locations, number of students and the general living standard of the area in which they are located (Ministry of Education 1992 : 70).

(Table : 6.4) List of Riyadh's City High School

Name of High School	Area	Living Standard
Al Imam Ashawkani	West of Eraija	Low Class
Siqilliah	Al Malaz	Middle Class
Tolaiha Alasadi	Al Rabwah	" "
Abu Bakr Bin Al-Arabi	Al Shifa	" "
Abo Tammam	Al Yamamah	" "
Al Edrisi	Al Nahdah	" "
Al Andalus	Al Salam	" "
Badr	Bin Ghanum	Lower Class
Al Jazirah	Olaishah	" "
Al Jawhari	Dhahrt Al Bade'ah	Middle "
Al Shifa	Al Shifa	" "
Al Natheem	Al Natheem	Lower "
Al Ridhwan	Al Naseem	" "
Al Riyadh	"	" "
Al Sulaimaniah	Al Sulaimaniah	" "
Al Aridh	Al Ma'ahid	" "
Al Ghafiqi	Um Al Hamam	Lower Class
King Abdulaziz	Ghubaira	" "
Al Ezz bin Abdulsalam	Al Aziziah	Middle Class
Al Olaya	Al Olaya	High Class
Al Faroque	Al Rabwah	Middle Class
King Fahad	Al Rawdah	" "
Al Faisal	Al Noor	" "
Al Qadisiah	Al Khalidiah	" "
Qurtubah	Al Naseem	Lower "
Al Mawardi	Al Andalus	Middle "
Mahmood Al Ghaznawi	Al Malaz	" "
Al Madeen	Al Eraija	Lower "
Al Mutamid Bin Abbad	Al Mursalat	Middle "
Capitol Idial Institute	Al Namuthajeah	" "
Musa Bin Nasair	Al Swaidi	" "
Al Najashi	Al Wooroud	High Class
Nahawand	Al Swaidi	Middle "
Yaqut Al Humawi	King Khalid Airport	" "
Al Yurmuk	Al Olaya	High Class
Al Yamamah	Al Moraba	Middle

Four schools in this list were chosen to represent the whole population i.e. third grade high school students in Riyadh city. They were selected carefully in order to represent the different social, economic and cultural background. These schools are:

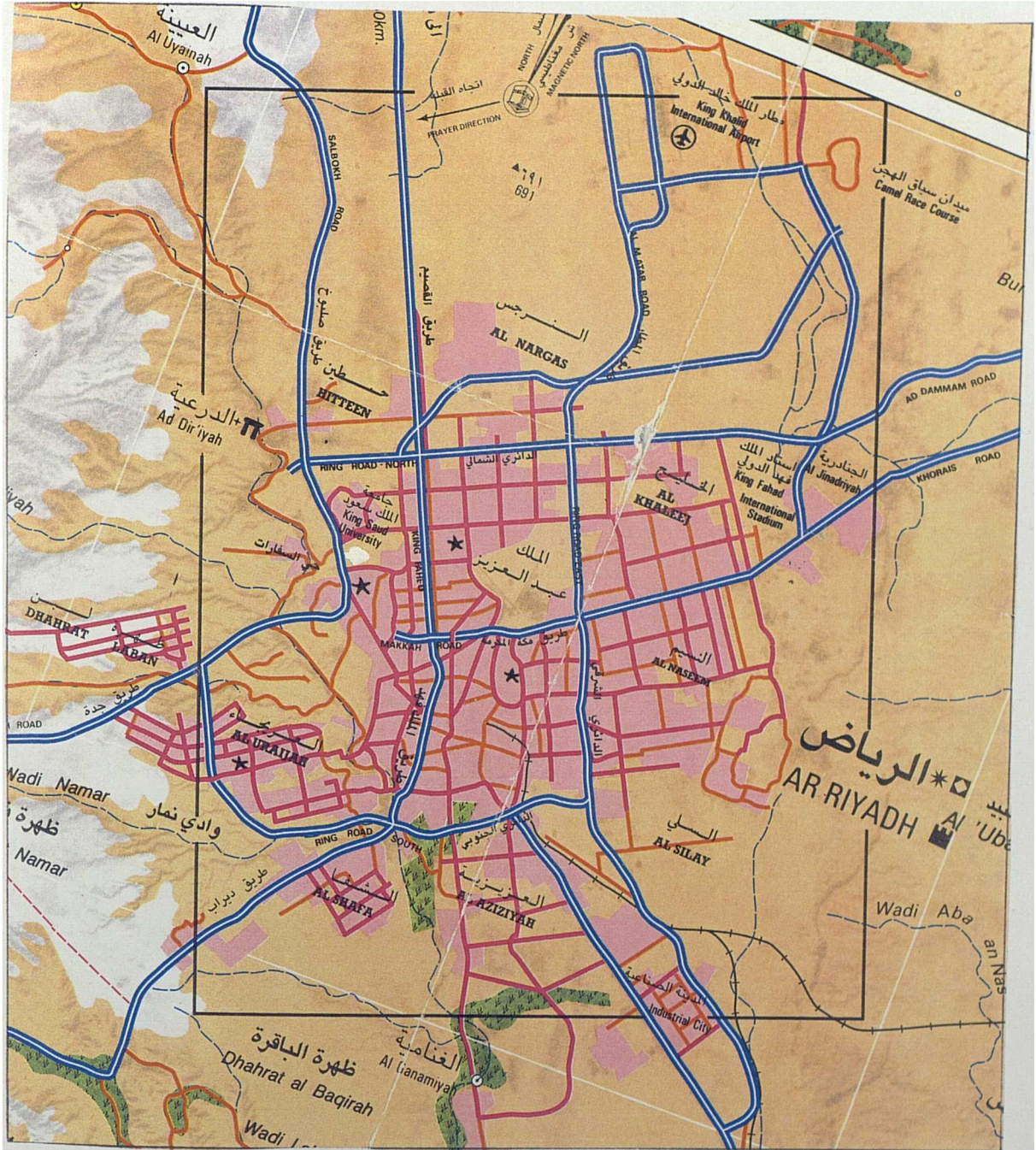
1. **Al-Najashi High School**: Situated in Al Wooroud , north of Riyadh. This area is considered to be a High class area - populated chiefly by influential people such as princes, business men and high government officials.
2. **Al-Ghaznawi High School**: Located in Al-Malaz area , east of Riyadh and inhabited by the Middle class.
3. **Al-Imam Al Shawkani**: Situated in the west of Eraija, south west of Riyadh. This is one of the few areas where council houses are more prevalent. As is the case in Western countries, most of the people living in this area are lower middle class or lower class. In fact the majority are Bedouins who settled in Riyadh after abandoning their nomadic life in the desert.
4. **Abdulrahman Al Ghafiqi High School**: Located in the north west of Riyadh which is regarded as a lower class area. This area is mainly inhabited by a mixture of lower classes Saudis as bedouins, and low-waged workers.

It should be mentioned here that all the schools in these different areas are housed in good, modern purpose-built government buildings (see the map of Riyadh which shows the schools' locations Fig.6.1).

6.10 Writing test instructions

Written instructions were given to both students and teachers to ensure that everyone understood the nature and aims of the test and that it was administered in a uniform way. The following steps were also taken to ensure the smooth running of the test.

Figure 6-1
 The Locations Of The Selected Schools In Riyadh. ★



Source : Map of Saudi Arabia, Farsi(1995).

Firstly, the purpose of the writing test was explained to both the teachers who helped in administering the test and to the students. I made sure that the students were informed that this test would not affect their examination record so that they were freed from any pressure whatsoever and consequently were able to devote themselves to the quality and the quantity of their writing.

Secondly, in order to ensure the maximum co-operation of the students, a 5 point credit could be given to any students participating seriously in the test. According to the Saudi Educational system, the teacher of any subject is given 30 out of 100 points which is the maximum grade. This 30 points bonus is left to the teacher to grant to any student who has shown good discipline, good participation in the class and has done his homework conscientiously.

Thirdly, the time of the test was selected carefully. Three periods were avoided: at the end of the school day when students were exhausted, sport classes which students like very much and break times. Therefore, morning classes which did not include the aforementioned periods were chosen to conduct the writing test.

Fourthly, I made sure that students took the writing test in a peaceful atmosphere, so that their attention was not distracted - free from any noise coming from other classes or from any sports activities taking place in the school or any building work which was going on at the premises.

Fifthly, in order to have the full participation of the students, I brought special pads for the pupils to write on. Each pad contained four pages. I also brought extra pens This was

done to avoid the possibility of any student making false excuses to avoid participating in the test by pretending that he did not have pens and paper. The topics of the composition test were written along with the instructions and were distributed to the students.

6.10.1 Students' instructions

The instructions given to the students were as follows

- (a) "Before you start writing, write your name, your school's name, your division i.e. Science or Arts, the title of the composition and today's date".
- (b) "Try your best to have your writing well organised, precise and comprehensive".
- (c) "Write on alternate lines". (See Appendix 2.A)

6.10.2 Teachers' instructions

For teachers the instructions given were as follows:

- (a) "Distribute the enclosed assigned topics. Read them together with the 'Instructions for Students' while the pupils read theirs.
- (b) "No help is to be given by the teacher. There is to be no discussion of or stimulus to the creative writing. No teacher will correct papers during or after the writing period".
- (c) "You may allow five minutes for students to select a topic (if needed) and organise their ideas. Strictly, students should start writing at the end of this five minute period".
- (d) "Students should be reminded that the purpose of this test is to improve the teaching and learning of the Arabic language. Therefore it will not affect their grades".
- (e) "You should make sure that the students accept the utter confidentiality of their

writing, so that they can write clearly and frankly."

- (f) "Students should be told that they should write using their own ideas and expressions, and should avoid quoting from other texts as much as possible".
- (g) "For the directed topic test, the students should be urged to write only about the Media and nothing else".
- (h) To ensure the overall homogeneity of the student sample, please mark with a star the papers of students who have unusual backgrounds. This will help the researcher to exclude their papers from the analysis. (This item in particular was verbally explained in detail to teachers) (see Appendix 2.B)

6.11 The Themes of the writing test

Students were tested twice in two different topics. These were :

1. Direct Topic

"Dear student, please write about the following topic:

"The Media and its effect on our Society. What do you think the role of the Media should be in order to contribute the prosperity of the nation?"

(see Appendix 3 A and 3.B)

2. Free Topic

"Dear student, write about any topic you think it is important to address"

(See Appendix No. 3).

6.12 Statistical procedure

First : Grammatical Errors:

How to decide whether one particular error is common or not has been a matter of dispute among researchers. Several factors have to be taken into account including the students' level, the examination set to investigate such mistakes and the size of the sample. There is no particular percentage agreed amongst researchers. From reading previous studies, I have come to realise that researchers differ greatly on the issue of what a common error is. Abo Sheashen (Al -Husaini 1980:100) considered 1 % an indication of a common error, which I believe is too rigid, because, if the student uses one grammatical component, the adverb as an example, and commit one error in one case, this is classified as a common error. This is not reasonable. Other researchers took 30% as the score for a common error, (Shahatah 1978:7) , quoted by (Alwan 1984: 22). This percentage, I believe, is too lenient in the context of language use. Therefore, I have decided to take 5% as a suitable indication for a common error. This takes into consideration both the usual meaning of common nature of grammar and its functions.

A grammatical error can be classed as a common error if the percentage of students who make an error in that particular component at least is 20% of the students who use that component.

I arrived at this percentage by plotting the distribution of a random sample of students on a normal curve according to their ability in using grammatical rules in their written work. This exercise yielded the following results:

1. 16% of the sample were on the far left of the curve. This represented the weak group.
2. 16% of the sample were on the far right of the curve. This represented the cleverer

group who used grammar successfully in their writing.

3. 68% of the sample were in the middle of the curve. This represented the average.

It would be unsuitable therefore to take 16% for weak students, because it is too rigid: the curve has to be shifted slightly towards the right (the average group). Thus, if the percentage of students who committed an error was 20% or more of those students who actually used that particular grammatical component, this would be considered a common error (Alwan 1984: 22).

To sum up the statistical procedure: the following six formulae were used:

1. In order to get the percentage of the grammatical errors for each student in one particular grammatical component I used this formula:

$$\frac{\text{The Frequency of an error in one *G.C.}}{\text{The Actual usage of that component}} \times 100$$

If the result of the division in formula (1) is 5% or more, then this student is considered an error committer.

2. To calculate the percentage of the students (error committers) among the sample the following formula was used:

$$\frac{\text{The number of students who committed an error in one *G.C.}}{\text{The total number of students}} \times 100$$

If the result of the division in formula (2) is 20% or more, it is considered a common error.

*G.C.: Grammatical Component.

3. The percentage of error makes in a sub-grammatical component can be obtained using this formula.

$$\frac{\text{The No. of students who committed errors in a type of G.C.}}{\text{The No of error committers in that component.}} \times 100$$

4. The percentage of errors in one grammatical component can be obtained from:

$$\frac{\text{The frequency of errors in a particular G.C.}}{\text{The total errors of all G.C.}} \times 100$$

- 5) To calculate the percentage of the actual usage of a grammatical component

$$\frac{\text{The frequency of the usage in separate one G.C.}}{\text{The total No of usage of all G.C.}} \times 100$$

- 6) Regarding general linguistic errors, (see chapter 6) the formula used to find out whether one particular error is common or not was as follows:

$$\frac{\text{The error committers in one particular linguistic error}}{\text{The total students}} \times 100$$

If the result of the division is 20% or more, the error is considered common.

Second : General linguistic errors.

The methodology adopted in analysing and calculating this type of errors is based on the percentage of error committers. The percentage is arrived at by observing all general linguistic errors of each student, counting the total number of error committers in each type then calculating the percentage in a certain component in relation to the gross number of students (see 7.8 for more details).

6.13 The study's criteria for incorrection

From reviewing old and contemporary sources dealing with the grammatical errors, I have adopted three sources for judging the students' writing as grammatically correct or otherwise. First, the syllabus of Arabic grammar designed by the Saudi Ministry of Education for the three main public education stages, elementary, intermediate and secondary school. Since grammar is naturally accumulative, every new experience of the learner is based on previous experience. Thus, the student at one stage is required to utilise all the grammatical rules he studied during the other stages of public education. At the same time, the grammatical errors a student falls into, which are not related to the grammatical components he studied during the previous stages, will not be counted against him and will not be considered grammatical mistakes. Second, use of the guidelines set out in the decision of the language Assemblies. And third the necessity for the agreement of most Arabic linguistic lexicons in case of doubt about the correction of words or expression.

6.14 Administration of the test

To obtain permission to conduct the field study in the selected high schools, I visited the General Department for Research and Education at the Ministry of Education. They examined my research proposal and supported its aims. The Ministry then wrote a letter (see Appendix No.1) to the General Department of Education in Riyadh region. The Director General gave the final approval and wrote a letter to all Principals of the selected schools, the administrators and the teachers requesting their help, services and co-operation in conducting the Test (See Appendix No.1).

I administered the test to the selected sample between the 15th March 1993 and the 14th June 1993. This period of time was selected carefully for two reasons; Firstly, it was nearly one

month before the final examination. That meant the students had covered the whole grammar text book. According to the teaching system in Saudi Arabia, this period of time should be assigned to a review of what had been taught the whole semester. As I had decided to use the Arabic Grammar for High School as one of the references by which to judge violations of Arabic grammar in the students' writing, it would not have been suitable to hold the students accountable for grammatical errors on a subject they had not been taught. Secondly, students' knowledge of Arabic grammar at this time was still very fresh, therefore, it was the most suitable time to observe the influence of what had been taught on their writing. I believe that some researchers adopted the wrong approach (Al-Husaini 1980 and Qinawi 1990) by conducting their writing test at the beginning of the year or over a long period, such as the summer vacation.

During implementation of the writing test, four procedures were considered: (a) although I was assisted by teachers to supervise the process of conducting the test, I followed closely all classes to ensure that the test was conducted properly; (b) I met the teachers who had been selected to assist me for supervision only a few hours before conducting the tests. This reduced the chance of students choosing the topic and writing it at home. The instructions for both the teachers and students were handed out to the teachers. They were informed of what should be done during the test and how to conduct it; (c) as two classes had been selected in each school, scientific and literary, I made sure that tests in both classes were conducted simultaneously to prevent any leakage of information about the topic of the tests to the other class; and (d) when students were given for the sign beginning the test, they started writing until they heard the school bell which was the signal to halt writing. They then submitted the papers to the teachers supervising the test. We did not notice any sign of fear, tiredness or

boredom. Most students finished writing before the end of the class; very few submitted their papers at the end of the time assigned.

As mentioned before , four schools were selected. In each school two classes of the third grade were chosen to represent that school - one from the Literary Division, the other from Science (see table No: 6.5).

I made sure that the students would not feel bored because they were going to take two writing tests and conducted the two tests for each class in two different weeks.

The total sample of the students selected from these four schools was 242 (see table No: 6.5). This figure may look small, but since I was going to test the sample twice on two different topics, the script analysis would in effect double the number of students.

Table 6.5
Numbers of Students' sample

Name of School	Literal Division	Science Division	Total
Al Ghaznawi	30	39	69
Al Najashi	31	32	63
Al Ghafiqi	25	30	55
Al Shawkani	27	28	55
Total :	113	129	242

Out of 242 students, 205 returned proper scripts which had followed the instructions as will be explained below giving an 84% return rate. (see Table No.6.6).

Table 6.6

Number of Scripts According to the Student's Speciality and Tests Type
(Third Grade)

Name of School	Division	Directed Topic	Free Topic	Total	
Al Ghaznawi	Art	29	27	56	130
	Science	36	38	74	
Al Najashi	Art	29	30	59	121
	Science	30	32	62	
Al Ghafiqi	Art	24	24	48	104
	Science	27	29	56	
Al Shawkani	Art	25	25	50	103
	<u>Science</u>	28	25	53	
Total :	<u>Art</u>	107	106	213	
	<u>Science</u>	121	124	245	458

Table 6.7**Number of Scripts Received and Scripts Which Were Not Included For Analysis.**

Name of School	No: of Scripts Received	No: of Scripts Excluded	No: of Scripts To be analysed
Al Ghaznawi	130	15	115
Al Najashi	121	13	108
Al Ghafiqi	104	11	93
Al Shawkani	103	9	94
Total :	458	48	410

As can be deduced from the above table, the total number of students whose scripts were removed from the sample was 48. There could not be included in the analysis for the following reasons. Firstly, some students wrote a large amount of text derived either from Koran, poetry or the Prophet's sayings which subverted the aims of the present study. Students were requested to write in their own style and not to depend heavily on others' texts. It would have been unsuitable to analyse a script which was not the student's own writings. Secondly, a few students were not serious in their writing, in fact they used very bad slang expressions, or wrote a few statements which showed no serious engagement with the test. Obviously, I had no option but to exclude them from the test. Thirdly, as the instrument was designed for students to take the test twice in two different subjects, in order to make sure that students would have a better chance of using as many grammatical components as they could, I decided not to include

students who did not participate in both tests (Free topic and Directed topic). Fourthly, in a few cases, some students not only did not take the writing test seriously but also caused trouble for the whole class. They were asked to leave the class after having been warned twice. Such action was necessary as other students could not concentrate on writing in the presence of the trouble makers. And fifthly, non -Arabic native students were not included. Although very few students' scripts were not considered for the analysis for this reason, it was a very important step to keep the homogeneity of the sample.

6.15 The method of transliteration

The reading of Arabic in Roman script involves problems more acute than are normal in the case of most other non-Roman scripts. The primary need of assigning Roman alphabet equivalents to the Arabic phonemes has never been decisively met. The transliteration of Arabic which has been adopted in this study needs clarification. For convenience sake, and in order to facilitate typing, a simplified version of the normal transliteration of Arabic has been adopted from various studies and books such Chejne (1969). This version employs only the letters and other symbols that are found on any ordinary English typewriter - see Table No: (6.8). It is important to note here that if the Arabic (*ha*) comes at the end of the word and preceded by (*fatḥah*) the method of transliterating this word is to place the (*ha'*) or the (*fatḥa*) for example *'idāḥah* can be written *'idāḥa*. Through this study all Arabic transliterated words, terms or sentences are italicized.

Table 6.8
Method of Transliteration

Consonants			Vowels Semi-Vowels etc		
Arabic sound	English sound	English Transliteration	Arabic Sound	English Sound	English Transliteration
ب	b	<i>b</i>			
ت	t	<i>t</i>	<i>fathah</i>	short a	<i>a</i>
ث	th(ink)	<i>th</i>			
ج	(gara)ge	<i>j</i>	<i>dammah</i>	short u	<i>u</i>
ح	non-existent	<i>h</i>			
خ	" "	<i>kh</i>	<i>kasrah</i>	short i	<i>i</i>
د	d	<i>d</i>			
ذ	th(at)	<i>th</i>	<i>shaddah</i>	double letters	2 letters
ر	r	<i>r</i>			
ز	z	<i>z</i>	long <i>fathah</i>	long a	<i>ā</i>
س	s	<i>s</i>			
ص	s(unday)	<i>ṣ</i>	long <i>dammah</i>	long u	<i>ū</i>
ض	non-existent	<i>ḍ</i>			
ط	" "	<i>ṭ</i>	long <i>kasrah</i>	long i	<i>ī</i>
ظ	" "	<i>ḏh</i>			
ع	" "	<i>c</i>	<i>hamzah</i>	glottal stop.	,
غ	" "	<i>gh</i>			
ف	f	<i>f</i>			
ق	non-existent	<i>q</i>			
ك	k	<i>k</i>			
ل	L	<i>L</i>			
م	m	<i>m</i>			
ن	n	<i>n</i>			
هـ	h	<i>h</i>			
و	w	<i>w</i>			
ي	y	<i>y</i>			

6.16 Error categories

As this research deals with Arabic grammatical errors, I faced a very difficult task in searching for English grammatical terminology equivalent to that of the Arabic language. This has been an even more difficult problem when dealing with a non-European language for which the conventional European terminology is quite unsuitable. So far as Arabic is concerned, almost all its linguistic phenomena fall into categories which did not correspond happily to European grammatical categories, and the use of conventional European terminology is consequently liable to mislead. There is a set of Arabic grammatical terms translated into English, mostly by orientalists who specialised in the Arabic language. In this translation of Arabic grammatical terms I have followed a book entitled Dictionary of Linguistic Terms by R.M. Baalabaki (1990), in which the author himself has depended on the orientalists' translations. These English terms, although not corresponding 100% with the Arabic grammatical terms, are self-explanatory in the sense of being easily remembered once the initial definition has been read. They can be found in the Glossary of this thesis (see Appendix 5).

The list of error categories was drawn mainly from the list which was adopted by Mahmood Al-Sayed (1972). His categories of errors have been followed in most research on grammatical errors. Although I feel that Al-Sayed's list has some shortcomings, it remains the main source for any grammatical error research. I benefited also from the error categories of Al-Husaini (1980) and Abu Shu'ayshi (1981).

In order to overcome any shortcomings this study's categories list was presented to a jury* consisting of Arabic language specialists. They made very valuable suggestions which were taken into consideration. The final form of the error categories is shown on the next page.

*The Members of the jury are: Dr. M. Abdulhaleem (Professor of Arabic Language at Al-Azhar University), Mr. R. Badair (B.A. and M.A. in Linguistic Studies from the Faculty of Arabic Language of Al-Azhar University), and Dr. A. Al-Otaibi, a lecturer at the Faculty of Arabic Language, University of Al-Madina.

Table 6.9

The Categories of Grammatical Error

1. *Hurūf ʾaljar* (prepositions):
 - a) unnecessary usage
 - b) *ʾaljar*
 - c) Exchange of prepositions:
 1. *ʾalbaʾ* (b)
 2. *fi* (in)
 3. *ʾallām* (l)
 4. *cala* (on)
 5. *min* (from)
 6. *can* (about)
 7. *ʾila* (to)

2. *Ficl* (verb)
 - a) *muḍāric* (present tense):
 - manṣūb* by affirming *nūn*
 - manṣūb* by omitting *nūn*
 - omitting *cillah* letter
 - majzūm* by omitting *nūn*
 - affirming *cillah* letter
 - b) *māḍī* (past tense):
 - formation
 - muctal*
 - feminine *nūn*
 - c) *ʾamr* (order tense):
 - muctal*
 - formation

3. *Mafcūl bih* (object):
 - a) *naṣb bil ʾalif*

- b) *naşb bilya'*
4. *Kana* and its sisters:
- a) *rafç (ism kana)*
b) *naşb (khabar kana)*
5. *Fācil* (Actor):
- a) *rafç*
b) unnecessary repetition
6. *Nact* (adjective):
- a) *rafç*
b) *naşb*
c) *jarr*
7. *Mubtada* and *khabar* (topic and coment):
- a) *rafç (mubtada)*
b) *rafç (khabar)*
8. *Inna* and its sisters:
- a) *nasb (ism 'inna)*
b) *rafç (khabar 'inna)*
9. *Ḍamīr* (pronoun):
- a) dependent pronoun (*mutaşil*)
b) independent pronoun (*munfaşil*)
10. *Cadad* (number):
- a) number agreement
b) addition of (*'al*)
11. *Catf* (conjunction):

- a) *naṣb*
- b) *rafʿ*
- c) *jarr*
- d) *macrifah* and *nakirah*

12. *ʾIdāfah* (construct chain) :

- a) *mudāf* (adjective)
- b) *mudāf ilayh* (genative)

13. *ʾIsm mawṣūl* (relative pronoun):

- a) feminine
- b) number agreement.
- c) masculine

14. *Alḥāl* (circumstantial accusative):

- a) *naṣb*
- b) gender

15. *ʾIsm ʾishārah* (the pointer word):

- a) gender
- b) number agreement

16. *Tamyīz* (specificative):

- a) *naṣb*
- b) number agreement

17. *Dḥarf* (adverb):

- a) *dḥarf Zamān* (adverb of time)
- b) *dḥarf makān* (adverb of place)

18. *Mafcūl mutlaq* (cognate object):

- a) actual
- b) substitution

19. *ʿAsmaʿalkhamsa* (the five nouns):
- a) *naṣb*
 - b) *jarr*
 - c) *rafʿ*
20. *Badal* (opposition):
- a) *rafʿ*
 - b) *naṣb*
 - c) *jarr*
21. *Mafʿul li ʿajlih* (causitive object):
- a) *naṣb*
22. *Sharṭ* (conditional style) :
- a) addition of (*ʾal*)

Table 6 . 10

The Categories of General Linguistic Errors

Sr. No.	Grammatical Errors.
1.	Words usage
2.	Foreign words
3.	Slang (words)
4.	Slang (expressions)
5.	Wrong translation
6.	Insertion of unnecessary words
7.	Double negation
8.	Incomplete sentence

6.17 Concluding remarks

The discussion in this Chapter has focused on the methodology followed to answer the seven questions raised in Chapter One. The main source of data was the written work of third year secondary school students (in both literary and scientific classes) rather than their other linguistic activities such as reading, talking, etc. which have been mentioned in Chapter Six.

The stages of the analysis of students' errors were reviewed in this Chapter. The study sample, which was referred to earlier in the study, consisted of the third-year pupils from four representative secondary schools in Riyadh city of Saudi Arabia. They were chosen to represent all the various aspects of social status (social, economic and cultural) in Saudi society.

After designing the statistical procedure, the researcher carried out a pilot study, the results of which formed the basis for implementing the main field study.

The following chapter details the results obtained from analysis of the students' writings, and attempts to answer the research questions.

Chapter Seven

Results and Data Analysis

Chapter Seven

Results and Data Analysis

7.1 Preface

It has been previously mentioned that there are several studies of grammar in the field of education in advanced countries like the United States and Great Britain. These studies examine the grammatical errors in students' writings and focus on the grammatical components where students' errors occur frequently. Such research shares one of the main objectives of the present research.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse the types and frequency of the grammatical errors committed in the writings of the third year male students in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This research set out to answer two main questions. First, what are the grammatical components in which third grade high school students commit errors? The answer will cover (a) the percentage of the students who make grammatical errors and (b) the percentage of the frequency of the grammatical errors. The second main question is what are the general linguistic errors and their percentage of frequency?

Grammatical components used by the students and the percentage of frequency will be investigated. This chapter will also look into the difference between the basic grammatical components as seen by specialists and the grammatical components resulting from this study. Reasons which cause students to make grammatical and general linguistic error will be highlighted along with comparison between the frequency of grammatical components and the

frequency of making errors.

As it would have been hard in this study to collect samples of students' writings in the third year of the secondary stage from all schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I decided to focus on the Riyadh area for my sample, owing to its distinctive quality. (For more details about the justification of choosing Riyadh see Chapter Six). The study's sample consists of 242 students of the third grade which is the final year of the high schools. Four high schools in Riyadh were selected carefully for this purpose.

The instrument of the study took a form of writing composition. Students were tested twice in two different topics. One of these topics was a directed topic about the media and the other one was left to the students to choose any topic they would like to write about. This chapter presents the results of the analysis of their writing as well as answering the research's questions.

7.2 Grammatical components used in students' writing

One of the preliminary steps to finding out about grammatical errors is to become acquainted with the actual usages of third year students at the secondary level. In terms of the present study, this knowledge enables us to develop a baseline against which to assess rates of error and other variables. In addition, knowledge of usage is of value to curriculum designers as it enables them to concentrate on the structures and components actually used by students.

Table 7.1**The Frequency of Usage of the Grammatical Components**

(Number of students : 205 students. The analysed scripts : 410 scripts)

Sequence	Grammatical Components	Number of Frequency	Percentage %
1	<i>fi'cl</i>	9683	13.58
2	<i>'ism mucaraf bi 'al and 'idāfa</i>	8830	12.39
3	<i>hurūf 'aljar</i>	7640	10.72
4	<i>fācil</i>	7453	10.45
5	<i>'idāfa</i>	4981	6.99
6	<i>mubtada and khabar</i>	4900	6.87
7	<i>catf</i>	4730	6.63
8	<i>maf'cūl bih</i>	4122	5.78
9	<i>nact</i>	3873	5.43
10	<i>damīr</i>	2814	3.94
11	<i>kāna and its sisters</i>	2394	3.35
12	<i>'ism 'ishāra</i>	2140	3.00
13	<i>'ism mawsūl</i>	1539	2.15
14	<i>'inna and its sisters</i>	1410	1.9
15	<i>alḥāl</i>	930	1.30
16	<i>badal</i>	804	1.12
17	<i>cadad</i>	629	0.88
18	<i>dharf</i>	467	0.65
19	<i>maf'cūl mutlaq</i>	460	0.64
20	<i>tamiyz</i>	385	0.54
21	<i>maf'cūl li ajlih</i>	370	0.51
22	<i>asma' alkhamsa</i>	267	0.37
23	<i>shart</i>	152	0.21
24	<i>na'ib fācil</i>	116	0.16
25	<i>almunādā</i>	61	0.08
26	<i>'illa lilḥaṣr</i>	49	0.06
27	<i>calam makhtum bi ta'attānith</i>	35	0.04
28	<i>'itha 'alfujā'iah</i>	9	0.01
29	<i>'uslūb attacjub</i>	3	0.004
30	<i>lā siyamā</i>	3	0.004
31	<i>kam alkhaboriyah</i>	2	0.002
32	<i>an alwasliyah</i>	2	0.002
33	<i>'ay'atafsiriyah</i>	1	0.001

Table (7.1) shows the frequency of usage of general grammatical components. The total number of usages is 71254. To establish this list, I made use of the research submitted by Mahmoud Al-Sayed for a Ph.D. degree from Ain Shams University in Cairo. The reason for my reliance on this list is that Al-Sayed's research is one of the earliest studies in the field of grammatical errors and one that paved the way for a number of other studies in different scholastic years. Another reason is that this list has been authorised by a committee of specialists in grammar teaching and linguistics. Other researches have also been consulted like those of Al-Husaini (1980) and Abu Shu'ayshi (1981).

I have noticed that the overwhelming majority of those who discuss the issue of error observation in the Arabic and English languages avoid analysing the actual usage of grammatical components. In my view, they do so not because this is insignificant, but because analysing every written sentence and observing general usages and categorising them requires an extraordinary effort. Error observation, on the other hand, only requires underlining or circling the phrase or word that violates the rules of the language.

The methodology used to analyse information about usage has been described in the previous chapter where a listing of the frequency of components in students' written work was also presented. In brief, the occurrence of a particular grammatical component, for example the adjective *nact*, was counted and the number of occurrences expressed as a percentage of the total number of grammatical components used, namely 71254. It is clear from Table 7.1 that there is a number of components not included in the list components in which students made errors. They were not incorporated in the list of students' errors because when they are used in written work errors do not appear. These basic components are as follows:

*almunada, 'ism mucaraf bi 'al and 'idāfa, na'ib fācil, 'illa lilhasr,
calam makhtūm bi ta' āta'nīth, 'uslūb āttacajub, la siyamā , kam 'alkhabariah
'an 'alwaṣliyah, 'ay ātafsīriyah and 'itha 'alfujā'iyah*

Table 7.1 also shows that there is a lack in the sample of eloquent expressions in Arabic. *'itha 'alfujā'iah* is used only nine times, *'uslūb attacajub* three times as is *lā siyamā. kam 'alkhabariyah* and *'an 'alwaṣliyah* are used only twice. The penultimate item is *'an 'alwaṣliyah* used only twice. At the end of the list lies *ay attafsīriyah* which is used by one student only.

These results are alarming. They indicate the deterioration of the students' use of classical Arabic expressions (*fushḥa*). These students are about to join a University where the enormous number of specialisations will not allow them to improve their Arabic style. Faculties of Engineering, Medicine, Commerce, Chemistry etc. focus mainly on teaching those specialisations. Even if they teach Arabic in their curricula, it is only symbolic and hardly helps in developing students' linguistic styles.

7.3 Overall results

Table 7.2
Number of Students with or without Errors
Number of Students 410

Students without Errors	20	Percentage %	4.87
Students with Errors	390	Percentage %	95.12

The table shows that 95% of students made errors in using the rules of Arabic. This is undoubtedly a large proportion which confirms my viewpoint that teaching Arabic grammar faces a real crisis.

In the previous chapter, we stated that this test was conducted on students during the late period of the third year of the secondary stage. This means that they have completed whatever different units of grammar they were assigned to learn. Moreover, a general secondary graduate in the Kingdom is supposed to have learnt all units of grammar during the three main educational stages, namely the primary, intermediate and secondary stages. In addition, the compilers of the grammar curriculum will have deliberately repeated grammar units during those three stages tackling their more complex aspects as the student becomes more advanced.

Nevertheless, we noticed that a great number of students make errors in the rules of grammar. It is true that the results of the study showed a vast disparity between students in the rate of making errors - as we shall discuss in the following pages - but the result still indicates a

large number of error makers. This by no means repays the great efforts exerted to teach them the rules of Arabic grammar during the three scholastic stages.

This proportion serves as a warning and makes it necessary to reconsider the methodologies and ways of teaching this important subject - to which I will refer in detail in the final chapter of this thesis.

7.4 Grammatical errors in students' writings

In the course of the pilot study it was found convenient to divide students' errors into two categories: grammatical errors and general linguistic errors. The methodology applied to the study of grammatical errors is the full error observation method which includes analysis of frequencies in both grammatical components and sub-components. Strictly speaking, general linguistic errors are also grammatical errors and would certainly be called such by grammar experts. However, we have made this distinction because it is not appropriate to apply the full analytic methodology to general linguistic error. Thus, while it is feasible to study errors and error frequencies in the use of the adverb and its sub-components, it would not be sensible to do the same with the incomplete sentence which, although it is an error, is not so easily quantified. To have tried to force such general linguistic errors into the wrong analytical mould would have led to confused and confusing results.

It is appropriate to divide the examination of the frequencies of grammatical errors into two basic parts:

1. The first part is the proportion of students who made errors in grammatical components. See Table No. (7.3).

2. The second part is the percentage of the common grammatical errors themselves.
(See Table No. (7.4).

These two parts simply reflect two different methods of calculating the frequencies of errors. The first part describes the number of students who made errors in a certain grammatical component as a percentage of the total number of students. For instance, the number of students who made errors in the component of adjective, *nact*, is 140. Thus their percentage in relation to the students of the sample - who number 205 - would be 68.29%. The second part is concerned with the errors in a particular component as a percentage of the total number of errors in all components.

Thus, we can calculate the percentage of errors in the component of the adjective *nact*, for example, by learning the number of errors in this component, which is 204 errors. The total number of grammatical errors in all components is 3214. Hence, the percentage of errors in the component of the adjective, *nact*, is 6.34%, and so on for all grammatical components.

7.4.1 The rate of students who committed grammatical errors

Table 7.3

The Percentage of the Students who Committed Grammatical Errors.

Sequence	Grammatical Components	Number of Students ⁻²¹⁰	Percentage %
1	<i>hurūf 'aljar</i>	188	91.70
2	<i>fi'cl</i>	175	85.36
3	<i>mafcūl bih</i>	171	83.41
4	<i>kāna</i> and <i>'its sisters</i>	165	80.48
5	<i>fācil</i>	149	72.68
6	<i>nact</i>	140	68.29
7	<i>mubtada</i> and <i>khabar</i>	104	50.73
8	<i>'inna</i> and <i>its sisters</i>	75	36.58
9	<i>damīr</i>	71	34.63
10	<i>cadad</i>	63	30.73
11	<i>catf</i>	49	23.90
12	<i>'idāfa</i> ^h	47	22.92
13	<i>'ism mawṣūl</i>	41	20.00
14	<i>alhāl</i>	24	11.70
15	<i>'ism 'ishārah</i>	21	10.24
16	<i>tamiyz</i>	21	10.24
17	<i>dharf</i>	18	8.78
18	<i>mafcūl muṭlaq</i>	11	5.36
19	<i>asmā'alkhamsah</i>	5	2.43
20	<i>badal</i>	5	2.43
21	<i>mafcūl li ajlih</i>	2	0.97
22	<i>sharṭ</i>	1	0.48

Table No (7.3) demonstrates that grammatical errors in the writings of third year students at the secondary stage are (common) in the following grammatical components:

Hurūf 'aljar, *fācil*, *mafcūl bih*, *nact*, *kāna* and *its sisters*, *mubtada* and *khabar*, *'inna* and *its sisters*, *damīr*, *catf*, *cadad*, *'idāfa* and *'ism mawṣūl*. A more precise measure of the relative frequency of errors can be gained by comparing the total number of frequent error makers in a

particular component to the total number of students. Thus if a student has an error rate of more than 5% in the use of a particular component this will be considered a high rate. If the total of all high scoring students in that component is calculated as a percentage of all students and that percentage exceeds 20%, then the error in that particular component is considered a common error (for further detail see the Chapter Six of Methods and Procedures of the Study). Grammatical components where the percentage of errors among the students of the sample does not exceed 20% are not considered components where errors are common.

The proportion of students' errors in the other components was below the 20% cut off point. Errors decrease gradually over the following components: *alḥāl* 11.70%, *'ism 'ishārah* 10.24%. *tamiyz* 10.24%, *ḍharf* 8.78%, *mafcūl muṭlaq* 5.36%, *'asmā' alkhamsa* and *badal* 2.43%, *mafcūl li'ajlih* 0.97% and *shart* 0.48%.

7.4.2 The rate of grammatical errors

A number of researchers in the field of students' error observation, in different subjects like dictation and composition, focused their researches on discovering the number of error makers and their percentages in each component. They did not examine the frequency of the errors themselves (see Al-Husaini 1980 and Abu Shu'ayshi 1981).

The method used here provides important statistical information for the researcher in the methodologies of teaching grammar by also including the frequency of the errors themselves. Through this method we can learn the number of errors in sub grammatical components (types of errors) and the total number of all errors, too, as we shall see in the following pages. Those researchers who only looked at percentage of students who made grammatical errors have incomplete results. For instance, the results of Al-Husaini's study (1980) in the component of

mafcūl bih demonstrated that 30.4% of students made errors in that component when the number of students who made errors was 70. Important as this information may be, it is incomplete as we know nothing about the number of errors themselves in each component or about the total number of errors in all components.

There is another reason that supports my conviction that learning the frequency of the errors themselves is a necessity. This is that it facilitates the process of classifying errors into four groups as will be seen in the following pages. As a consequence, statistical information becomes clearer, and easier to display. Through this methodology we can learn to which group each component belongs according to its frequency.

Before setting out the data on the frequency of errors, it is worth noting how difficult it was to determine the frequency of grammatical errors within the same component. The first methodology - adopted by Al-Sayed 1972 and others - is based on calculating error frequency in one component as a percentage of the total number of errors in all components. The second methodology - adopted by Abu Shuayshi (1981) - is based on calculating the errors in one component as a percentage to the total number of usages of the same component.

The drawback with Abu Shuayshi's method is that it does not enable the researcher to calculate the relative frequency of errors in particular components in students' written work, because it gives no weight to the overall frequency of use. Thus, a component with errors occurring in five out of ten uses will score the same as one used a hundred times with 50 errors. The frequency of use is lost in the final calculation.

In order to make sure that I was using the best methodology I decided to make a comparison of their results when applied to my own data. For example, analysis of the *fācil* component using the methodology of this thesis showed that the students made 191 errors in its use which made it the sixth highest in the error rating. If the *fācil* data was analysed using Abu Shuayshi's method, it came fourteenth in the error rating. Similarly, *fācil*, analysed according to the method adopted in this study, had an error count of 447, which put it towards the top of the error ranking. According to Abu Shuayshi's method it would be tenth in the ranking.

If the results gained by using the Abu Shuayshi method are compared with the results of many other well-known studies, major contradictions again appear. There is of course variation between studies. Thus, *mafūl bih* may be first in one study and third or fourth in error rating in others. In the present study it is ranked first and in Al-Husaini's 1980 study it came second. If Abu Shuayshi's methodology is applied *mafūl bih* is ranked fifteenth. This is clearly unacceptable.

For all these reasons, I selected Al-Sayed's methodology (1972) which is based on calculating the error frequency within the same grammatical component as a percentage of the total number of grammatical errors in all components. It does not rely solely on the students' usage of a grammatical component itself.

Table 7.4

The Frequency of the Grammatical Errors and their Percentage

Sequence	Grammatical Components	Frequency of Errors	Percentage %
1	<i>hurūf aljar</i>	667	24.75
2	<i>mafcūl bih</i>	631	19.63
3	<i>fiḥl</i>	447	13.90
4	<i>kāna</i> and its sisters	314	9.76
5	<i>nact</i>	204	6.34
6	<i>fācil</i>	191	5.94
7	<i>mubtada</i> and <i>khavar</i>	174	5.41
8	<i>ḍamīr</i>	91	2.83
9	<i>inna</i> and its sisters	90	2.80
10	<i>cadad</i>	85	2.64
11	<i>catf</i>	73	2.27
12	<i>idāfah</i>	52	1.61
13	<i>alhāl</i>	52	1.61
14	<i>ism mawṣūl</i>	46	1.43
15	<i>ism ishārah</i>	26	0.80
16	<i>dharf</i>	25	0.77
17	<i>tamiyz</i>	24	0.74
18	<i>mafcūl muṭlaq</i>	11	0.34
19	<i>badal</i>	7	0.21
20	<i>asma alkhamasa</i>	5	0.15
21	<i>mafcūl li ajlih</i>	2	0.062
22	<i>sharṭ</i>	2	0.062
	Total :	3,214	

As mentioned above, it is helpful to place the results of the error analysis into four categories. This classification helps to relate the results to the students' overall comprehension of grammar in general and of specific components in particular.

For Table No. (7.4) we can see that the degree of error frequency in grammatical components varies considerably. This variation is the basis on which the lowfold categorisation is made, as follows:

Group A: includes grammatical components whose error frequency is 10% or more.

Group B: includes grammatical components whose error frequency is greater than 5% but less than 10%.

Group C: includes grammatical components where students' error frequency exceeds 1% but is less than 5%.

Group D: the last group includes grammatical components where the students made errors whose frequency is less than 1%.

The following table shows the distribution of grammatical components among these low groups.

Table 7.5

The Distribution of the Errors found in the Grammatical Components according to the Frequency Groups

Type of Group	Grammatical Components	Percentage %
Group A	<i>ḥurūf aljar</i> <i>mafcūl bih</i> <i>fiḥl</i>	20.75 19.63 13.90
Group B	<i>kāna</i> and its sisters <i>nact</i> <i>fācil</i> <i>mubtada</i> and <i>khavar</i>	9.76 6.34 5.94 5.41
Group C	<i>ḍamīr</i> <i>inna</i> and its sisters <i>cadad</i> <i>catf</i> <i>ʿidāfah</i> <i>alḥāl</i> <i>ʿism mawṣūl</i>	2.83 2.80 2.64 2.27 1.61 1.61 1.43
Group D	<i>ʿism ʿisharah</i> <i>dharf</i> <i>tamiyz</i> <i>mafcūl muṭlaq</i> <i>badal</i> <i>ʿasma ʿalkhamsah</i> <i>mafcūl li ʿajlih</i> <i>sharṭ</i>	0.80 0.77 0.74 0.34 0.21 0.15 0.0162 0.062

I will not at this stage link analysis of the results of the previous Table to the detailed results for each component, the causes behind errors or their explanation. All these matters will be discussed in the analysis of sub-grammatical components. However, it is worth noting here that Table 7.5 shows clearly that there are certain grammatical components where the

proportion of errors is alarmingly high like *hurūf ʾaljar* and *mafcūl bih*. Errors are repeated in these two components more than 600 times in the sample as a whole. On the other hand, the students in the sample made errors only twice in the components of *mafcūl li ʾajlih* and *sharṭ*. The high proportion of errors in some components and the low proportion in others cannot be attributed solely to their difficulty or to the influence of colloquial dialect. It sometimes reflects the excessive or meagre usage of the component.

In Table No. (7.6) therefore we will make a comparison between the frequency of use of grammatical components and the frequency of errors in them.

7.5 Errors frequency and usage frequency

Table 7.6

A Comparison between the Frequency of the Usage and the Frequency of the Errors of the Grammatical Components.

Sequence	Grammatical Components	Frequency of Usage	Frequency of Errors
1	<i>fīcl</i>	9683	447
2	<i>hurūf 'aljar</i>	8830	667
3	<i>fācil</i>	7453	191
4	<i>'idāfah</i>	4981	52
5	<i>mubtada and khabar</i>	4900	174
6	<i>catf</i>	4730	73
7	<i>mafcūl bih</i>	4122	631
8	<i>nact</i>	3873	204
9	<i>damīr</i>	2814	91
10	<i>kāna and its sisters</i>	2394	314
11	<i>'ism 'isharah</i>	2140	26
12	<i>'ism mawṣūl</i>	1539	46
13	<i>'inna and its sisters</i>	1410	90
14	<i>alhāl</i>	930	52
15	<i>badal</i>	804	7
16	<i>cadad</i>	629	85
17	<i>dharf</i>	467	25
18	<i>mafcūl mutlaq</i>	460	11
19	<i>tamiyz</i>	385	24
20	<i>mafcūl li 'ajlih</i>	270	2
21	<i>asmā' alkhamisa</i>	267	5
22	<i>shart</i>	152	2

The above Table confirms what has been previously mentioned: that the low proportion of errors in some components does not necessarily mean that they are used correctly but that it is attributable to their scarce use. The components of *shart* and *mafcūl li 'ajlih* are used incorrectly only twice but, if we consider the number using *shart* we find it was used 152

times despite the fact that the number of scripts is 410. This means that only 37% used this grammatical component. The same result holds for the component of *mafcūl li ajlih*.

The comparison Table makes clear that, in the majority of grammatical components, where students make errors, the more usage, the more errors. The component of *hurūf 'aljar*, for instance, was the second in the frequency of usage at 8830, and was the first in the frequency of error. Similarly, the *fi'cl* component was the first in the number of usage and the second in error frequency. However, there are other grammatical components which were correctly used by the students. The *'idāfa* component, for example, was used by students 4981 times and they made only 52 errors. So, it is fourth in usage but twelfth in error frequency.

A question emerges here: Do these twenty two components analysed in this study conform to what some specialists in grammar teaching call 'the basic grammatical components'? The answer is in the following pages.

7.6 The basic grammatical components

Before we make a comparison on the one hand between the grammatical components where, according to our study, errors occur; and on the other opinion of specialists in grammar teaching about the grammatical components that should be taught, it is appropriate to put forward a brief discussion of the value of resorting to specialist opinion.

Youngsters do not acquire experience by receiving bits of information directly and storing it into their minds, as had been thought earlier by educators in the field of teaching language. Rather, it is acquired through dealing with one's environment, as these youngsters are compelled to interact with their surroundings in order to satisfy their needs and attain their aims. In the light of this, education has taken a new direction and now seeks to transfer the focus of

attention from the subject matter to the student himself so that the education subject is organised from a psychological perspective. This organisation takes the learner's interests into consideration and pays attention to his needs, his capabilities and the requirements of his environment and ultimately of his life itself.

The amount to be extracted from the subject is defined by the basic principles because these are considered generally helpful in most of the situations an individual faces in his interaction with his environment. These principles must be explicitly related to the requirements of the student's growth, to the social moves and to the reality and circumstances of society so that the student recognises their importance in his life and in the life of his society.

An education that lacks the realisation of general principles does not assist intellectual enlightenment. The best way to make a subject sound exciting to the student is to make it worth knowing, i.e. to make the information the student receives relevant to his thinking outside the sphere where he learnt it (Ashour 1991: 58).

These general considerations demonstrate the importance of knowing the principles of the grammatical subject to be taught to the students. The participation of those concerned with teaching Arabic in suggesting what they view as necessary to learn is an important requirement as they are the most capable of realising what grammar the ordinary learner needs to help him correct his style, improve his expression and understand what he reads. Mahmoud Al-Sayed (1972) is considered the first specialist in teaching the rules of Arabic. He draws attention to the importance of learning the principles of grammar. In his thesis he canvassed the opinions of a number of specialists on the principles of grammar that should be taught to the student. He made these opinions one of the sources of the curriculum he suggested for grammar teaching.

Al-Sayed selected these specialists very carefully. Some of them are specialists in teaching grammar in the universities of Egypt in Cairo. Others teach Arabic literature, rhetoric, criticism and philology in the same universities. Others are Arabic supervisors who work in the field of Arabic teaching in preparatory and secondary schools. Others are members of the Arabic Assembly.

The study divided grammatical components into two parts, the first of which all specialists agreed on the necessity of teaching, the second included those grammatical components that did not have the consensual validation of those specialists. The consensual components - with which we are concerned in this research, are listed in the following Table.

Table 7.7

The Basic Grammatical Components according to Al-Sayed's Study

Sequence	the Basic Components
1	<i>fi'cl mutharic</i> (the verb of present tense)
2	<i>fācil</i> (the actor)
3	<i>na'ib fācil</i> (passive voice)
4	<i>mubtada</i> and <i>khabar</i> (topic and comment)
5	<i>'inna</i> and its sisters
6	<i>kāna</i> and its sisters
7	<i>maf'ul bih</i> (object)
8	<i>dharf</i> (adverb)
9	<i>'alhāl</i> (circumstantial Accusative)
10	<i>'istithna'</i> (exemption form)
11	<i>tamiyz</i> (specificative)
12	<i>hurūf 'aljar</i> (prepositions)
13	<i>'Idāfah</i> (consturct chain)
14	<i>catf</i> (conjunctions)
15	<i>hurūf 'annasb</i>
16	<i>hurūf 'aljazm</i>
17	<i>'asma 'al 'istifhām</i> (the nouns of interrogative)
18	<i>'ifrad, tathnia</i> and <i>jamec</i>
19	<i>'asma 'alkhamsa</i> (the five nouns)
20	<i>nact</i> (adjective)

(Al-Sayed 1972 : 74)

If we compare Al-Sayed's list of basic components with the list of components of this study in which the students made errors, we see that most errors occurred in the basic components see Table 7.8.

Table 7 . 8

The Basic Grammatical Components found in the writing sample

Sequence	The Grammatical Components
1	<i>fi'cl</i>
2	<i>fā'cil</i>
3	<i>mubtadd'</i> and <i>khobar</i>
4	<i>'inna</i> and its sisters
5	<i>mafcūl bih</i>
6	<i>alhāl</i>
7	<i>dharf</i>
8	<i>tamiyz</i>
9	<i>hurūf 'aljar</i>
10	<i>'idāfah</i>
11	<i>catf</i>
12	<i>na'ib fā'cil</i>
13	<i>kāna</i> and its sisters
14	<i>nact</i>
15	<i>'asma 'alkhamsa</i>

Looking at the Table No7.8 it is clear that the students in the sample made errors in fifteen components out of the twenty one basic components, or a percentage of 75%. This obviously indicates students' weakness in using the basic components of grammar that are indispensable to a correct usage of the language.

It is worth noting here that I found the results of Mahmoud Al-Sayed's study concerning specialists' opinions on grammatical components, useful for several reasons. Firstly, the results of his study are so credible and well-supported that most research in the field of grammatical errors has relied on them for explanation and comparison. Secondly, Al-Sayed

depended on the opinion of specialists in the Arabic language in Egypt. It is well known that teaching Arabic in Egypt excels teaching in the rest of the Arab countries. Teaching Arabic in the majority of Arab countries depends mainly on the experiences of Egyptian Arabic linguists. The Egyptian celebrities of Arabic studies, its authors, scholars of criticism and rhetoric, have all surpassed their counterparts in the other Arab countries. Accordingly, Al-Sayed's results about the basic principles of grammar are to be respected and followed due to Egypt's seniority in the field of grammar teaching.

7.7 The results of the analysis of the types of grammatical components in which students committed errors

We have previously discussed the frequency of errors in basic grammatical components. Now we examine the sub-grammatical components (types of errors)*. It is important to focus on the sub-grammatical components because it is hard for the researcher into grammatical errors to observe them adequately when merely examining their frequency in the basic components. Confining analysis to main grammatical components makes the results of the study deficient. For instance, we cannot just accept that a student made frequent errors in the component of *ḥurūf 'aljar* (prepositions) without reviewing the sub-components (types of errors), namely *'aljar* and the exchange of prepositions. The latter also require a detailed explanation of the error frequency by examining the prepositions in the use of which students made errors : *min, fi, 'alba,.....*etc. Another example is the use of *ḍamīr*. If we observe only the frequency of errors without reviewing the sub-components, we would sound like one who says: "I visited a number of countries in Asia" as an answer to this question : What countries did you

*(Type of errors) and (sub-grammatical components) are used interchangeably in this study.

visit in Asia? The answer would sound incomplete if he did not specify which countries he visited. Students make errors with the *ḍamīr* component in important types of parts of speech which are as follows: dual, feminine plural, singular and masculine plural. This is also the case with the rest of the grammatical components.

One of the principal objectives of the investigating of grammatical errors in the sub-components is to uncover the reasons for the students' committing such errors. Their study of grammatical components clearly did not help them avoid making grammatical errors, nor did it make any impact on correct styles or sound expressions. The teachers' and curriculum - compilers' interest in some grammatical or sub-grammatical components at the expense of others, where students do make errors, may be one of the causes of persistent error making.

In order to complete the exploration of this important aspect, it is necessary to review the sub-grammatical components where students make errors so as to see which are more error prone. Before starting to analyse errors in the sub-grammatical components, it is appropriate to point out that the grammatical components are divided into two sections:

The first is the group of grammatical components where the error frequency is common, according to the methodology of the study. These components are:

hurūf aljar, fi'cl mafcūl bih, kāna and its sisters, fācil, na'ct, mu'tada and khabar 'inna and its sisters, ḍamīr, cadad, catf, 'ida'fa and 'ism mauṣūl

The Second is the group of grammatical components where students made errors, but the error frequency is not large enough to be common according to the methodology of the study. (For more details, see the chapter of "Method and Procedure of the Study"). These components are:

'alhāl, 'ism 'ishara, tamiyz, mafcūl muṭlaq, 'asma 'alkhamsa, badal, mafcūl li 'ajlih and shart.

7.7.1 *ḥurūf 'aljar*

Table 7.9

Frequency of Types of *ḥurūf aljar* component Errors (prepositions)

Number of Error Commitors	Percentage %	Sub-Component	Number of Sub-Component Error Commitors	Percentage %
		unnecessary usage	85	45.21
		'aljar	71	37.76
188	91.70			
		Exchange of Prepositions:		
		<i>albat</i> (B)	59	31.38
		<i>fi</i> (in)	35	18.61
		<i>'allam</i> (L)	29	15.42
		<i>cala</i> (on)	18	9.57
		<i>min</i> (from)	18	9.57
		<i>can</i> (about)	14	7.48
		<i>'ila</i> (to)	9	4.78

Table No. (7.9) shows frequency of students' errors in *ḥurūf 'aljar*. We find that 91.70% of students made errors in this component. The error frequency in the sub-components of *ḥurūf 'aljar* varies. The highest proportion of errors is in the unnecessary usage of *ḥurūf 'aljar* where 85 students made errors. This represents 45.21% of the total number of the students who made errors in the component of *ḥurūf aljar*. The total number of the students who made errors in *'aljar* is 71 representing 37.76% of the total. Regarding the exchange of prepositions, analysis of the students' writings shows that most of the errors were made in *'albat* where 59 students made errors. 35 students made errors in *fi*; 29 students made errors in *allām*; 18 made errors in *cala* and *min* individually, 14 in *can* and finally 9 students made errors in *'ila*.

What is strange in the results of *ḥurūf'ajar* is that they represent the highest proportion of error making. 91% of the students is a very high percentage in all measures especially when we bear in mind the simplicity of the rule of *ḥurūf'ajar*. It is easy to understand *ḥurūf'ajar* and their impact on nouns. This high proportion of errors can be attributed to many factors, namely :

1. Students' enormous usage of *ḥurūf'ajar*. It represents the third highest grammatical component students use with 7640 occurrences. Naturally, the more a component is used, the greater the chance of error making.
2. Lack of concentration on the conception and lexical meaning of the grammatical rule. Despite the ease and simplicity of the rule of *ḥurūf'ajar*, it seems that some students overlook the impact of *ḥurūf'ajar* on the subsequent nouns. They focus only on the semantic composition.
3. Lack of the knowledge of the real meanings of *ḥurūf'ajar*.

I noticed that most of the students errors were in the exchange of prepositions. For instance, they would write *'ila* instead of *calā*, and use *fi* when they meant *can* and so forth. By acquainting myself with the assigned subject and attending some grammar lessons, I came to see that all effort is focussed on teaching the students the rule of *ḥurūf'ajar* without discussing their meanings and connotation or training the students to use them.

7.7.2 *Ficl*

(Table 7.10)

Frequency of Types of *Ficl* component Errors (verb)

Number of Error Commitors	Percentage %	Sub-Components	Number of Sub-Component Error Commitors	Percentage %
<u><i>Ficl</i> (verb)</u>				
175	85.36	<i>muḍāric</i> (present tense)	115	65.71
		<i>māḍī</i> (past tense)	96	54.85
		<i>'amr</i> (order tense)	25	14.28

Table No: (7.10) details the error frequency of *ficl* and its sub-components. It shows that the total number of students who made errors in this component as a whole was 175, representing 85.36% of students of the sample. This general frequency marks considerable variation between the sub-components. The highest proportion occurred in using *muḍāric*. 115 students made errors in *muḍāric* which is 76.71% of the number of students who made errors in *ficl*. The second sub-component was *māḍī* where 96 or 54.85% of the students made errors. The last one was *'amr* where 25 (14.28%) of the students made errors.

It is appropriate to mention in this respect that the component of *ficl* - though second in the order of frequency of students' grammatical errors after *ḥurūf 'aljar* - is the first in frequency of use : *ficl* was used 9683 times. (see Table No.7.1). This underlines the importance of the *ficl* component and the necessity of concentrating on it. I believe that the gross results for the verbs : *muḍāric*, *māḍī* and *'amr* mentioned in the previous Table are not adequate. Equally

necessary is the examination of the cases where students made errors in each of the aforesaid types of verb as will be detailed in the following table:

7.7.2.1 *Mudāric*

Table 7.11

Error Frequency of *Mudāric* (Present Tense)
(Sub-component of *fi'cl*)

Type of <i>Fi'cl</i>	Number of Error Commitors	Percentage %	Types of <i>Mudāric</i>	Number of Errors	Percentage %
<i>Mudāric</i> (Present Tense)	115	85.36	<i>marfūc</i> by affirming <i>nūn</i>	59	51.30
			<i>manṣūb</i> by omitting <i>nūn</i>	86	74.78
			omitting <i>cillah</i> letter	55	47.82
			<i>majzūm</i> by omitting <i>nūn</i>	45	39.13
			affirming <i>cillah</i> letter	20	17.39

In Table No. (7.11), we notice that there are five cases of *mudāric* where students made errors. In the first case (*marfūc* by affirming *nūn*), 59 students made errors out of the 115 students who made errors in using *mudāric* i.e. 51.30%. In the second case (*manṣūb* by omitting *nūn*), 86 students or 74.78% of the students made errors.. Following this is (omitting *cillah* letter) where 55 students (47.82%) of the students made errors. In the fourth case (*majzūm* by omitting *nūn*), 45 students (17.39%) of the students made errors.

I should point out that the five types in Table 7.11 are instances of the correct use of *mudāric*. The statistical figures and percentage of errors refer to students who deviated from these correct forms.

The first case (*mansūb* by omitting *nūn*) can be used as an example . One student wrote this sentence :

Lan yahzimūn farīqanā
They will not defeat our team.

The rule of the Arabic language stipulates that when *Lan* is introduced before a *muḍāric* attach plural *nūn*, *nūn* must be omitted. So, the correct sentence is (*Lan yahzimū*). Error frequency in this case is due to the influence of colloquialism on students' writing. The *muḍāric* in the cases of '*afcal'alkhamsa*, the five verbs, is attached with *nūn* in all cases whether it is *mansūb* or *majzūm*. This is undoubtedly a great influence on error frequency in this case.

The second case, (*marfūc* by affirming *nūn*) however, is contrary to the first. If a *juzm* or a *naṣīb* is not introduced to the five verbs, the *nūn* has to be affirmed. Nevertheless, a number of the students made errors in this as is obvious from the following examples. One student wrote:

hum yalcabū wa yarkuḍū
They play and run.

The two verbs *yalcabū* and *yarkuḍū* are neither preceded by *nāṣīb* nor by *jāzm*. Thus, the *nūn* should have been affirmed and the sentence become *yalcabūn wa yarkuḍūn*.

Though the colloquial dialect in the Riyadh area affirms *nūn* with the five verbs in all cases, as we have mentioned before, the students' error in omitting *nūn* in the second case is due to two reasons. Firstly, colloquial dialect in the other areas - like the Western area for instance - differs from that of Nejd as people there omit *nūn* in all cases. Thus, students belonging to other areas made errors in the second case. Secondly, some students deliberately omit *nūn* believing that this would be the style that shows the teacher their ability to apply grammatical rules. However, they get confused and make errors in the application. Students made errors in the third and fifth cases (omitting or affirming *nūn*) because they deviated from

the grammatical rule that stipulates that if there is a *cillah* letter in a singular *mudāric*, it must be affirmed in the *rafʿ* and *nasb* cases, but must be omitted in the *jazm* case. The results of the analysis showed that some students made errors in applying this rule as the following example demonstrates:

Li annahu lam yatūb min thanbih.
because he did not repent from his sin.

The correct usage is : *Lam yatub.*

In the fourth case (*majzūm* by omitting *nūn*) students made errors as the following example shows :

Lam yasmacūn naṣīhtanā.
They did not listen to our advice.

Lam is one of the *jazm* articles. When *Lam* is introduced into the five verbs, *nūn* must be omitted. So, the correct usage in the above example is *Lam yasmacū.* Errors in this case are due to the impact of colloquialism that affirms *nūn* in all cases; besides students' lack of understanding of the grammatical rule.

7.7.2.2 *Māḍī*

Table 7. 12

Errors Frequency of types of *Māḍī* component (Past Tense)
(Sub-component of *fiʿl*)

Type of <i>Fiʿl</i>	Number of Error Commitors	Total Percentage %	Types of <i>Māḍī</i> (Past Tense)	Number of Error Commitors	Percentage %
<i>Māḍī</i> (Past Tense)	96	54.85	Formation	64	66.66
			<i>muctal</i>	32	33.33
			feminine <i>nūn</i>	19	19.79

Table No.: (7.12), shows that 96 students made errors in the use of *māḍī*, which represents 54.85% of the total number of students who made errors in *fiḍl as* a whole. The first case is (formation) where 64 students made errors. This corresponds to 66.66% of the total number of the students who made errors in *māḍī*. The second case is concerned with *māḍī muctal* where 32 (33.33%) of the students made errors. In the third case (feminine *mūn*), which is called in Arabic (*nūn annusuah*), 19 (19.79%) of the students made errors.

The types of *māḍī* mentioned above may sound a little vague. This is due to the fact that shortage of space in the boxes of the table has forced me to keep my descriptions brief. A somewhat fuller description of these cases is needed.

The first case (formation) refers to students' errors in forming *māḍī* correctly. One student, for instance, wrote this clause:

alqa almudīr: kalimatan ṭawala fihā cala alḥuḍūr.

The Principal delivered a very long speech to the audience.

The error in this case is the form of *māḍī* : *ṭawala*. The correct form is *aṭāla*. My knowledge of the colloquial dialect in the Riyadh area tells me that it has influenced students in making errors in the formation of *māḍī* as in the above example.

The second case (*muctal*) refers to the *māḍī* verb in the middle or the end of which there is one of the *cillah* letters which are : *wāw*, *ya'* and *alif*. The example below illustrates an error here:

Thahaba ṣadiqān'ila alḥadiqah wa tamashā hunāk

Two friends went to the garden and walked there.

The error here is in *tamashā*. The correct form is *tamashayā* by replacing *cillah* letter *ʿalif* with *yā*. Certainly, colloquialism has no effect in this example as it is well known that students find *cillah* letters difficult to use because they have one form in *māḍī*, another in *muḍāric* and a third in *ʿamr*. Therefore, lack of practice of the rule of *cillah* letters and their changes causes the frequency of students' errors.

The third and the final case of *māḍī* tense is (the feminine *nūn*). This *nūn* is used in the rules of Arabic grammar to make a distinction between the feminine and the masculine. One student wrote on referring to his mother and sisters :

Wa qad waḍacū alḥaqa'ib fi ʿassayārah.
And they put the luggage in the car.

But, since he was speaking about a group of females, he made an error by using the *māḍī* verb *waḍacū* without the feminine *nūn*. The correct form is *waḍacnā*. Such errors are due to the influence of colloquial language which does not often use feminine *nūn* on speaking about females. I noticed that this error has been common among people for the last forty years. However, older people over sixty tend to use this rule correctly.

7.7.2.3 *ʿAmr*

Table 7.13

Error Frequency of types of *amr* component (Order Tense)
(Sub-component of *fiʿl*)

Type of <i>fiʿl</i>	Number of Error Commitors	Total Percentage %	Type of <i>amr</i>	Number of Error Commitors	Percentage %
			<i>muctal</i>	18	72.00
<i>ʿAmr</i> (Order Tense)	25	14.28			
			formation	12	48.00

As it is illustrated in Table No. (7.13), the results of analysing student's use of *amr* show that students made fewer errors than in *muḍāric* and *māḍi* tense. This does not necessarily mean that they have mastered the grammatical a rule of *ʿamr*, rather than they do not use *amr* very often.

Students made errors in *ʿamr* with (*muctal*), which was described above (Table 7.13) 18 students made errors in *muctal* that is 72% of the total number of students who made errors in using *ʿamr*. Students made errors in *muctal ʿal ʿākhir* in particular. *Muctal al ʿākhir* is that verb ending with one of the three *cillah* letters. The following sentence, written by one of the students, provides an example of this error :

Qala ʿAhmad li wāladih, ʿishtariy kitāban muḍīdan.

Ahmad said to his son : buy a useful book.

The error in this sentence lies in the *ʿamr* verb *ʿishtari* due to the final *yaʿ* whereas the correct form is *ʿishtar*. *ʿAlif* is one of the *cillah* letters that must be omitted when the verb is changed into *ʿamr*. The reason behind this error is the difficulty of the rule of the attachment of *cillah*

letters to the *'amr*. It has been mentioned before that *cillah* letters change into different forms when they are attached to *'amr*, *muḍāric* and *māḍi* verbs. Thus, students became confused and consequently made errors.

The second type of *'amr* tense is (formation) by which is meant that a number of students made errors in forming the *'amr* tense correctly. The student writes an incorrect formation intending to mean one thing when it means, in actuality, something else. The following sentence is a sample of this type of error:

wa qad 'actā 'alqā'id 'awāmirahū : tawājadū hunāk
and the leader gave his orders : be there....

The *'amr* verb in this example (*tawājadū*) does not mean (be there) as the student intends, rather it means (be kind to each other). This meaning is certainly not intended by the student as the context of his writing indicates. It was easy for me to spot this error as I was aware of the spread of this style among cultured people and, in particular, in all sorts of mass media - whether audio, visual or published. This incorrect usage has naturally leaked to some school students.

7.7.3 *Mafcūl bih*

Table 7.14

Frequency of types of *mafcul bih* Component Errors (Object)

Number of Error Commitors	Percentage %	Sub -Component	Number of Error Commitros	Percentage %
171	83.41	<i>naşb bil 'alif</i>	107	62.57
		<i>naşb bil ya'</i>	81	47.36

Table No: (7 .14) presents detailed statistics of the frequency of *mafcul bih* (object). The number of students who made errors in this component as a whole is 171. This number represents 83.41% of the total. The sub-components are divided into two main parts. The first part is (*naşb bil 'alif*) where 107 or 62.57% of the students made errors The number of error makers in the second part *naşb bil ya'* is 81 (47.36%) students .

It is worth noting that *mafcul bih* is one of the components where error frequency is very high. In fact, it occupies third place in the error frequency list. However, it is not one of the most highly used components coming only eighth in the use frequency list with a score of 4122.

Before analysing the statistical results of the sub-components of *mafcul bih*, I should note that *mafcul bih* belongs to one of the cases of *'icrāb*, namely *naşb*. This case is divided into two parts *naşb bil 'alif* and *naşb bil ya'*. Each part is further sub-divided into two kinds, as will be detailed below.

Errors recur more frequently in the first part (*naṣb bil 'alif*) which comprises two kinds the first of which is *mufrad* (singular) the second, *jamc taksīr* (broken plural). Here is an example of a student's error in using singular *mafcūl bih* :

actaytu sadiqī qalam jamīl.
I gave my friend a beautiful pen.

In this sentence the student made an error in *qalm* as the *naṣb* sign, namely *'alif*, disappeared.

The correct form is *qalamān*. Some students omitted *naṣb* sign which is *'alif* in the *jamc taksīr* (broken plural) as well. One of them wrote:

shāhadatū tullāb muḥtāzīn fi tillkā almadrāsah.
I have seen excellent students in that school.

The word *tullāb* is *mafcūl bih* but the *naṣb* sign is omitted. The correct form is *tullāban*.

Certainly, the reason behind the errors in *naṣb bil 'alif* - whether *mufrad* or *jamc taksīr* - is the influence of colloquial dialect on the style of students' writing. Colloquialism in the Riyadh area - even in all areas of the Kingdom - does not show the *naṣb* sign.

The second part of *mafcūl bih* is *naṣb bil yā'*. The proportion of error frequency by the sample students is less than here than for the first part. This part comprises two sub divisions, namely *jamc muthakar assālim* (sound masculine plural) referred to as j.m.s. and *muthana* (dual). For clarity's sake, I give this example of a student's error in J.m.s. :

wanaṣaḥa mudīr almadrāsah almushagībūn biltizām alhudū'
The Principal of the school advised the trouble makers to calm down.

The word *almushāgībūn* is the *mafcūl bih* where the error was made as it is not *manṣūb bil yā'*. The correct form is *almushāgībīn*. Because it is not widely used, a small number of students made errors in the component of *muthanā* (dual). The sentence below is an

example of a student's error in *muthanā* when it occurs as *mafcūl bih* :

..*sācadtu - muhtasiban'ila Allāh - rajulan kafifān.*
...I helped, thinking of getting reward from God, two blind persons.

It is obvious that *mafcūl bih* is *rajulan*, but it has not got the sign of *naṣb bil yā'* to be *rajulayn*. *Muthanā* in the *naṣb* case is followed in colloquial language in Riyadh area, but there are two other reasons for making these errors.

The first reason is the long gap between *fi'cl* and *mafcūl bih* (subject and object) which perplexes some students as the previous example makes clear. There is a four word parenthesis between *fi'cl (sācadtu)* and *mafcūl bih (rajulān)* which causes confusion and consequently errors occur.

The second reason is that the colloquial never uses *muthanā* in the *raf'c* case. Thus, some students deliberately try to distance themselves from the colloquial dialect by using *muthanā* in the *raf'c* case incorrectly.

7.7.4 *Kāna* and its sisters

Table 7.15

Frequency of types of *Kāna* and its Sisters components errors

Number of Error Commitors	Percentage %	Sub-Component	Number of Sub-component Error Commitors	Percentage %
165	80.48	<i>Rafc</i> (<i>ism Kāna</i>)	109	66.06
		<i>Naṣb</i> (<i>khobar kāna</i>)	93	56.36

Kāna and its sisters is considered one of the most important components in the rules of the Arabic language. This is attributed to the fact that it is frequently used and needed. As the title of the component connotes (sisters), it is obvious that there is a number of verbs that share the rules of *kāna*. *Kāna* has a topic that must be put in the *rafc* case and a comment that must be put in the *naṣb* case. The following is a list of the verbs that are called the sisters of *kāna* which students used in their writings. The list also provides their closest English meanings.

<i>Kāna</i>	=	verb to be
<i>mā zāla</i>	=	remain
<i>ʾaṣbaḥa</i>	=	became
<i>ṣāra</i>	=	became
<i>mā dhalla</i>	=	remain
<i>amsā</i>	=	became

These verbs are called in Arabic (*af'āl nāqīṣah*) incomplete verbs or defective verbs whose most similar forms in English are auxiliary verbs.

Though they occupy the eleventh degree of usage - used 2394 times according to Table No: (7.1), they occupy the fourth degree of error frequency - a fact that necessitates paying attention to this component , whether taught or learned.

Reviewing Table No: (7.15) we realise that the number of students who made errors in the basic component is 165 or 80.48% of the total number of students who made errors.

The cases of *'icrāb* of *kāna* and its sisters are divided into two main parts namely :

- a. *Rafc* which is the case of *'icrāb* of *'ism kāna*. 109 students made errors in this part representing 66.00% of the total number of the students who made errors in the component of *kāna* and its sisters.
- b. *Naṣb* which is the case of *'icrāb* of *ḵhabar kāna*. 93 students made errors in this sub-component representing 56.36% of the students who made errors in the main component.

Concerning the *rafc* case that belongs to *ism kāna*, students' errors varied here from *mufrad* (singular), *muthanā* (dual) and *jama* (plural). I will mention only one error written by one of the students:

kāna 'allācibīn mutcabīn jida.
The players were very tired.

The word *allācibīn* is *'ism kāna*. The error is made as it is put in the *naṣb* case where it should have been the *rafʿ* case. The correct form is *allācibūn*. The cause of this error is not only due to the influence of colloquialism which often uses *'ism kāna* in the *naṣb* case, particularly *jame sālīm* and *muthanā*. It can also be attributed to a more powerful factor, which is the ignorance of many students of the grammatical rule of *kāna* and sometimes the confusion between it and the rule of *'inna* and its sisters.

The second case of *kāna* and its sisters is the *naṣb* case, which is opposite to that of *'ism kāna*. However, some students made errors in applying the rule of *khābar kāna*, like the following example written by one student describing his friend :

wa lākin ṣara mukhlis.
but he was sincere.

In this example the student used *ṣarā* one of the incomplete verbs (*fiʿl nāqis*), which is one of the sisters of *kāna*. His error is in making *khābar marfūʿ* whereas it should be *manṣūb* to be as *mukhlisān*. Students' errors in placing the correct *'icrāb* sign to *khābar kāna* may be attributed to two factors : the first is that most errors occur when *'ism kāna* is *ḍamīr mustatir* (hidden pronoun) as the aforesaid example illustrated. The disappearance of *'ism kāna* misleads the student who thinks that *khābar kāna* is *'ism*, and makes the error. The second is that a number of students know the rule of *kāna* as it is well known and widely used, but do not know its sisters. These reasons do not justify students' errors - they still remain errors - but they are attempts to explain how the error is made, like a physician diagnosing his patient's illness.

7.7.5 *Fācil*

Table 7.16

The Errors Frequency of types of *fācil* components (Actor) or (Doer)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>fācil</i>				
149	72.68%	<i>rafci</i>	119	79.86
		Unnecessary repetition	30	20.13

The above table gives the statistical details of the error frequency in the use of *fācil* actor. The number of students who committed errors in using this component was 171 or (84.41%). As has been noted, the frequencies of errors is related to the frequency of usage. *Fācil* was used 7453 times which is the fourth highest rate of use (see Table No 7.1).

The sub components of *fācil* are divided into two sections, the first, and principal one, is the *rafci* (nominative case). Analysis of the students' writings showed that 119 students, or 79.86% made errors in *rafci*. The second section is (unnecessary repetition). The number of students who made errors here was 30 or 20.13% of the total number of students who committed errors in the component of *fācil*.

It is worth mentioning in this context that any *fīcl* (verb) in Arabic must have a *fācil* (doer), otherwise the sentence would be incomplete. *Fācil* is always in one case,

namely the nominative (*rafʿ*) case. Nevertheless, the sign of nomination (*rafʿ*) differs according to the type of *fāʿil*. For example: the sign of the singular is *ḍammah*, the sign of the dual is *ʿalif ʿal* *ithnayn*, and the sign of the sound masculine plural is the letter of *nūn*. Below is an example of an error by one of the students:

Shahadaʿalḥādirīn filman muntāzan
The people watched an excellent film

The word (*alḥādirīn*) is the *fāʿil*, but the sign of *rafʿ* is not present. The correct form of the word is *ʿalḥādrūn*.

Certainly, the reason behind the frequency of errors in *fāʿil* in the case of *rafʿ* is that the colloquial language does not follow the case of *rafʿ* if the *fāʿil* is a sound masculine plural as seen in the previous example and also if the *fāʿil* is dual. Consequently, these errors are common in the students' writings and it is illogical to put the blame on the grammatical rule of the *fāʿil* which is itself easily understood.

The second section of errors in *fāʿil* component is (unnecessary repetition). This means that the student may unnecessarily repeat the subject (*doer*) in the same sentence. One of the sample students, while describing a problem that occurred between him and his colleagues, wrote:

Wa qad ḍaḥikū attulāb calā zamīlihim.
and the students laughed at their classmate

The error in this sentence is in the word '*ḍaḥikū*', specifically in the letter (*ū*), as it is *wāw al jamācah* (a letter expressing plurality) and a *fāʿil*. This is a pronoun while at the same

time there is a *fācil*, a substantive one, namely *attullāb*. This is an unacceptable repetition according to Arabic rules. The correct sentence should read as follows:

Wa qad dahika attullābū clā zamīlihim

The reason for committing this error is that the student does not pay due attention to the case of the *fācil* as it can be substantive, implied or a pronoun. If the *fācil* is substantive, it is easily recognised and thus the *'icrāb* (inflection) is subsequently taken care of. Whereas, if the *fācil* is a pronoun or implied, some students cannot recognise it and therefore intentionally repeat the *fācil* as a substantive without any need. It is interesting to mention here that the ancient grammarians noticed the error of unnecessary repetition in the early eras of the flourishing of Arabic 1200 years ago and called it *'akalūnī 'albarāgīth* (I have been eaten by insects).

7.7.6 *nact*

Table 7.17

Frequency of types of *Nact* components (adjective)

No of Errors Committers	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub- components Errors committers	Percentage %
nact				
140	68.29	<i>rafç</i>	92	65.71
		<i>naşb</i>	31	22.14
		<i>Jarr</i>	25	17.85

The above table shows the number of students who committed errors in the rule of *nact* and the frequency of errors. 140 students or 68.29% of the total sample students who committed errors in the grammatical rules committed errors in *nact*. This is the sixth highest rate among the grammatical rules where the students committed mistakes (see Table No. 7.3). The rule of *nact* was placed ninth in usage with 3873 occurrences as shown in Table No.(7.1).

From the above table, it is evident that there are three main cases of the *nact* rule, namely, *rafç* (indicative), *naşb* (accusative) and *jarr* (genitive). In the *rafç* case, the analysis of the students' writing showed that 92 or 65.71% committed errors. In the accusative (*naşb*) case, 31 or 22.14% of the students committed errors. In the case of the

genitive (*jarr*) the number was 25, representing 17.85% of the total number of students who committed errors in the *nact* rule.

Before I proceed to provide samples of the students' writings, it is worth mentioning here that the *nact* adjective in Arabic follows the case of the substantive. If the substantive is in the nominative case, the *nact* (adjective) shall be in the nominative case. If the substantive is in the accusative case, the *nact* shall follow it. If the substantive is in the genitive case, the *nact* shall be in the same case.

To make clear the nature of the students' errors in the *nact* rule, I shall provide some examples. In the *raf'c* case, which is the first case of *nact* one of the sample students wrote the following sentence:

kama thahaba aṭtullāb almushāgibīn 'ila mudīr 'almadrasah
and the student trouble maker went to the principal of the school

The error lies in the word *almushāgibīn* as it is written in the *naṣb* case whereas the correct case is the nominative because it is an adjective of the word *'attulāb* which is also in the *raf'c* case as it is a *fācil*. Thus the correct sentence should read (*'attulāb almushāgibūn*).

As regards errors in the *naṣb* case, one of the students wrote the following sentence:

nadhārat 'ilayhi fawajadathu shābban wasīm
She looked at him and found that he was a handsome young man

The error is in the word *wasīm* because the student did not put *'alif* which is the sign of *naṣb*. This should have been done here as the *nact* is modifying the word *shābban*. Thus the correct phrase reads:

Shābban wasīman.....

The last case is that of *jarr* (genitive). The following is an example from one of the sample students:

.....Sāfaha 'al malik cdadan min 'al mwāṭinīn 'al mukhliṣūn
The King shook hands with a number of sincere citizens

The student made an error in the word *al mukhliṣūn* as he put it in the *rafc* case whereas it is a modifier (adjective) of the word *'al mwāṭinīn*, so it must be in the *jar* case. Therefore, the correct phrase would read:

....'almwāṭinīn 'almukhliṣīn.....

From the analysis of the students' errors in the rules of *nact*, it has been found that there are a number of reasons which contribute to the students making errors, namely:

(1) Some students do not know the rules of *nact*, therefore they make errors because they do not know the correct case of the *nact*. (2) Separating the adjective from the substantive causes difficulty to some students and thus they cannot decide the proper inflection, as seen in the following example:

.....'auhibu 'attullāb 'al mujiddīn fī durūshim 'al muṭicūna liwālidihim.
I love hardworking students who are obedient to their parents

I have noted that a number of students make errors in parsing *nact* because of the error in parsing the substantive as shown in the following example:

fashāhdtu qiṭār sarīc
and I saw a fast train

The word *sarīc* is the *nact*. The student made the error in choosing the right inflection due to his mistake in parsing the substantive (*qiṭār*). Thus, the correct phrase should read: *qiṭāran sarīcan*.

7.7.7 *Mubtada and khabar*

Table 7.18

Frequency of types of *Mubtada* and *Khabar* component (topic and comment)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>mubtada and khabar</i>	50.735			
104		<i>raf̄c (mubtadā)</i>	68	65.38
		<i>raf̄c (khabar)</i>	49	47.11

The above table shows the results of the analysis of the students' writings in relation to the rules of *mubtadā* and *khabar* (topic and comment). The number of students who committed errors amounted to 104, representing 68.29% of the total number of the

sample students, namely 205. The topic of *mubtadā* and *khobar* ranks number seven amongst the grammatical topics where the students committed errors. See Table 7.3. The topic ranks sixth in frequency of use with 4900 occurrences, as shown in Table 7.1. There is thus a higher frequency of use than of error for this sub-component.

In the above table the column for results of the analysis of the sub-components contains the same case twice, namely *rafʿ* (nominative). This is due to the fact that both the elements *mubtadā* and *khobar* take the same case, *rafʿ*, all the time. As regards *mubtadā* 68, or 65.38% of the students committed errors in using it grammatically, whereas the number of students who committed errors in *khobar* was 49 or 47.11% of the total sample.

Even though *mubtadā* and *khobar* are always in the nominative (*rafʿ*) case, the inflection of this case is different. It is *ḍamma* if the *mubtadā* and *khobar* are singular. It is *ʾalwāw* if they are sound masculine plural or one of the five nouns. It is *ʾalif* if the *mubtada* and *khobar* are dual *muthanā*.

Further examples are provided to give a more explicit picture of the nature of students' errors in the *mubtadā* and *khobar* components. The first example is the error in the *rafʿ* case of the *mubtadā*: one student wrote the following sentence:

alcālamayn ʾal' islāmī wal carabī yughatṭiyān misāḥah kabīrah fil cālam
Both Islamic and Arabic worlds cover a large area of the globe

ʾAlcālamayn is *mubtadā* but it does not assume *rafʿ*, which is wrong. The correct form of the word is *ʾalcalamān* because *alif* is the sign of *rafʿ* for the dual formula.

The second example concerns the *rafʿ* of *al khabar*. One student wrote the following phrase:

wa ʾamma ʾal mudarisūn fahum masrūrīn
whereas our teachers are happy.

The student made an error in the word *masrūrīn* as he put it in the *naṣb* or *jarr* mood and it should actually be put in the *rafʿ* mood as it is a *khabar*.

The *mubtadā* and *khabar* component, I would argue, is one of the most important components of grammar for sentences often contain *mubtadā* and *khabar*. As a result, the compilers of Arabic curricula have focused on these two components and given them great attention. This is apparent as they have been put in the curricula of the majority of the three stages of public education, namely the primary, the preparatory and the secondary (The Ministry of Education, 1988: 99).

However, we notice that the results of analysing students' writings in relations to the component of *mubtadā* and *khabar* in particular are disappointing when measured against the intense coverage this component receives in the curriculum.

I believe that the causes of errors in the component of *mubtadā* and *khabar* are mostly the following:

- Neglecting the significance of the *mubtadā* and *khabar* rule due to carelessness.

- . The pervasive impact of the colloquial dialect on students' writings.

The colloquial dialect does not put *mubtadā* and *khavar* in the *rafʿ* mood, especially when they assume the form of dual or sound masculine plural.

- . Through analysing the students' writings, I noticed that students confuse *khavar* and *ʾalḥāl*. As a result, *khavar* is given the rule of *ʾalḥāl* which is *naṣb*, as has been illustrated in the example mentioned earlier in this component:

fahum masrūrīn they were happy.

The word *masrūrīn* is the error as it resembles *ʾalḥāl*.

7.7.8 *ʾInna* and its sisters

Table 7. 19

Frequency of types of *ʾinna* and its sisters component error

No of Committors	Errors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
	<i>ʾinna</i> and its sisters				
75		36.58	<i>naṣb (ʾism ʾinna)</i>	47	62.66
			<i>rafʿ (khavar ʾinna)</i>	38	50.66

The component of *ʾinna* and its sisters is one where confusion is frequent especially with the component of *kāna* and its sisters. The rules of Arabic grammar

provide that *'inna* and its sisters have the opposite function of *kāna* and its sisters, as *'ism 'inna* assumes the *naṣb* mood and *khobar 'inna* assumes the *rafʿ* mood.

The principal meaning of *'inna* and its sisters is confirmation. When the speaker or the writer uses *'inna* or any of its sisters, he wants to emphasise something. The most notable sisters of *'inna* which students use are *layta*, *ka'anna*, *Lackinna*, *'anna*, and *lacalla*. These are called sisters of *'inna*, because they are identical in two major respects:

1. They are particles to confirm written and oral speech.
2. The topic always takes the *naṣb* mood, whereas the comment always takes the *rafʿ* mood.

As the table above clarifies, the analysis of students' writings shows that the total number of students who made errors in the component of *'inna* and its sisters was 75. This represents 36.58% of the gross number of students who made errors in all grammatical components.

The *'icrāb* cases of *'inna* and its sisters have been divided into two major parts:

Rafʿ, which is the case of declension of *'ism 'inna*. 47 students made errors in this part representing 62.66% of the total number of students who made errors in the component of *'inna* and its sisters.

Naṣb, which is the *'icrāb* case of *khobar 'inna*. 38 students made errors in this part representing 50.66%.

The following is an example from the writings of one student:

fa'akhbaranī 'anna Khālid tālibun mumtāzun
he told me that Khalid is an excellent student

Here the student made an error in the word Khalid which is *'ism 'inna*. It should have been put in the *naṣb* case so that the correct phrase would be: (.....'anna Khālidan...)

An error in the *'icrab of declining khabar 'inna*, is obvious in the following example derived from the writing of one of the students of the sample:

.....*Lākinnaḥum ṣādiqīna fī aqwālihim.*
But they were ~~truthful~~ in their statements.

This student made an error in the word *ṣādiqīna* as it should be put in the *raf'c* mood because it is *kabar ka'anna*. The correct form is as follows: *Lā kinnaḥum sādiqīn*

I noticed that the majority of the errors made by students in the component of *'ism 'inna* occurred in the case when it is single, owing to the impact of colloquialism. The number of errors decreases dramatically if *'ism 'inna* is either dual or sound masculine plural as they are compatible with the colloquial dialect. In *khabar 'inna*, the number of errors increases when it assumes the form of the dual or sound masculine plural, because it is put in the *raf'c* mood which is insignificant in the colloquial dialect. Moreover, the similarity between the term *'inna* and its sisters and the component of *kāna* and its sisters together with their different *'icrāb* functions led some students to be confused in using the correct *'icrāb* mark, hence making grammatical errors.

Table 7. 20

Frequency of types of *Ḍamīr* component errors (pronoun)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub- components Errors committors	Percentage %
pronoun	34.63	dependent pronoun (<i>muttaṣil</i>) independent pronouns (<i>munfaṣil</i>)	51	71.83
71				

Ḍamīr, pronoun, is divided into two main parts: apparent and latent. We are concerned in this research with the apparent pronoun because it is impossible to observe errors in the latent pronoun, for it is simply not written and this research concerns itself with written errors only. As for the apparent pronoun it is sub-divided into two sections:

1. Independent pronoun which is detached from any other word
such as : (*hum*) they, (*humā*) they for two, (*huwā*) he, (*hiyā*) she etc.
2. Dependent pronoun which is attached to another word whether it
be a noun, a verb or a preposition such as :
‘uḥibbuh : I love him.
Sayyāratuhum : their car.

The above Table, shows that 71 students made errors in both dependent and independent pronouns. This number represents 34.63% of the total number of the student who made errors in all grammatical components. This component ranks ninth among the grammatical components where the students made errors (see Table No.7.3) It was used 2814 times which places it eleventh in the frequency of usage of components listing as shown in table 7.1.

The above Table shows the results of the analysis of the sub component of pronoun. In the first section (dependent pronoun), the number of the students who made errors was 51, representing a percentage of 71.83% of the students who made errors in the sub-component of pronoun. In the second section (the independent pronoun) the number of students who made errors was 37 representing 51.11%.

The difference in the error percentage between these two cases was not unexpected. The error percentage in (the dependent pronoun) is greater because the user of Arabic whether writing or speaking, uses the dependent pronoun much more than the independent pronoun. Consequently the possibility of error is greater. It is important in this context to examine the nature of the errors committed by the students and give some examples of the students' writings. I noticed the following:

1) The usage of the masculine pronoun in place of the feminine pronoun and vice versa. One of the students wrote the following phrase:

.....*kamā sācadahum fi ḥaml ḥalḥaqā'ib*....
... and he helped them in carrying their luggage

In the above example, the student was speaking about a man who helped his sisters, yet the phrase seems to be speaking about the man's help to a number of men. Thus, the student used the masculine plural pronoun instead of the feminine plural pronoun. The correct phrase should read:*kama sācadahun*....

2) Confusion in the usage of pronouns: e.g. the usage of the plural pronoun instead of the dual:

... *alwaladān akhathā al hadyyah wa hum fariḥin*
the two boys took the gift and were happy.

The plural pronoun *hum* in the above sentence seems to suggest the student was speaking about a number of men and not about two persons. In contrast to English, Arabic differentiates between the dual and the plural in pronouns. I also noticed the usage of the pronoun *hum* for things (not human) like using (it) for (he) in English.

Undoubtedly, the reason behind the students' error in the pronoun sub-component is the influence of the colloquial dialect. For example, the everyday colloquial dialect does not use the feminine plural pronoun *hunna, 'antumna* nor does it use the dual pronoun - *humā, 'antumā* - but it uses the plural instead. The neglect of the pronoun

reference by the student leads him to make errors instead.

7.7.10 *Cadad*

Table 7. 21

Frequency of types of *Cadad* component Errors (Number)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>Cadad</i>				
63	30.73%	number agreement	47	76.19
		addition of (<i>ʔal</i>)	20	31.74

When we use the word *cadad* (number) we do not mean the figures, such as 6, 132, 56. Writing the numbers in figures rarely leads to errors but writing the numbers in letters, such a six, twelve, fifty six, often leads students to commit errors.

The above table shows that the number of students who made errors in the component of number amounted to 63 representing 30.73% of the total number of students who made errors in all grammatical components. The *cadad* (number) component ranks tenth in error frequency (see Table No.7.3) , but comes seventeenth in usage frequency (see Table No.7.1). In the column related to sub-components in the above table there are two sections for the cases of number where the students made mistakes.

The first section is (number agreement). This means that the usage of number in Arabic necessitates the agreement between the number and the counted object as regards being singular or plural and feminine or masculine. The number of the students who made errors in this section reached 48 or 76.14% of the total number of students who made errors in the *cadad* component.

The second section is the addition of *'al*. This means unnecessarily adding *'al* to the adjective number. The number of students who made errors in this section amounted to 20 or 31.74% of the total number of students who made errors in this component.

To give a clearer picture of errors in the first case, I will quote a sentence written by one of the students:

....*zārani fi 'albait arabacu 'aṣḍiqā'*
four friends have visited me at home

The error in this example is in the number (*'arabacu*) as the student did not add *ta'* *'almarbūṭah* to the number. If the counted object is masculine, according to the grammatical rule, the correct sentence should read:

arbactu asḍiqā'

The following example is a sample of errors in the second case, the addition of *'al*

'aṭṭaytu 'alfaqīra 'al khamsata cashara riyālan.
I gave the poor man fifteen Riyals.

In this example the student added *'al* to *khamsata* which is an adjunctive number. This is not necessary and the sentence would be correct without *'al*.

Despite the fact that this component comes tenth among the other components where the students made errors (see Table No.7.3), I have noticed that there is a difficulty encountered by most people, especially cultured persons, while writing numbers. This was noticed particularly in the writing of bank cheques where most people make errors in writing the numbers. I am puzzled why those concerned with analysing students' writing such as the Al-Husaini study (1980) and the study conducted by Abdullah Likdeem (1988) who did not refer *cadad* component in their categories

The reason behind the errors made by the students in the number component is neglect of the number grammatical rule and confusion about number agreement. Some students think that *ta' almarbūta* in the number is the feminine sign (*ta' atta'nīth*) and the result is the addition of this *ta'* to the adjunctive number if the counted object is feminine which is an error.

7.7.11 *Catf*

Table 7.22

Frequency of types of *catf* component errors (conjunction)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>Catf</i>				
49	23.90%	<i>naṣb</i>	21	42.85
		<i>rafʿ</i>	17	37.25
		<i>jarr</i>	12	24.48
		<i>macrifah</i> and <i>nakirah</i>	7	14.28

The usage of *hurūfʿal catf* (letters of conjunction) is very common. These letters are made use of - as is the case in any other language- for connection words and sentences and arranging speech. The most important letters of conjunction used by the sample students in their writings are:

ʿal wāw: (and); *thumma* : (then); *ʿalfa* : (and)

Before discussing with the results of the analysis of the use of the *catf* component, which are listed in the above table, I would like to define three main terms:

1. *Ḥarf al ʿcatf*: letter of conjunction
2. *Catif*: the word that comes after the letter of conjunction

3. *Maçūf*: the word that comes before the letter of conjunction.

The above Table details the number of students who made errors in the *caft* component and the error percentage. The total number of students who made errors was 49 or 23.90% of the students who made errors in all grammatical components. The *caft* component, thus, comes eleventh in error frequency as shown in Table No. (7.3). In usage frequency, *caft* component comes seventh with 4730 occurrences; see Table No. (7.1).

The sub-component column in the Table No. (7.22) shows that there are four cases where the students made errors:

- A - *Naşb* where the students made errors representing 42.85% of the total total students who made errors in the *caft* component.
- B - *Rafc* where 17 students made errors representing 37.25%.
- C - *Jarr* where 12 students made errors representing 24.48%.
- D. -*Macrifah and nakirah* (definite and indefinite) where 7 students made errors representing 14.28%.

The following sentences are example from the students' writings:

- 1) *Rafc*: *Aṭṭullāb yalcabūna kurat'alqadam wal mudarisīna yalcabūna bilwaraq*
students are playing football and teachers are playing cards.

The error lies in the word *'almudarisīn* as it seems to be in the *naṣb* or *jarr* mood whereas it must be in the *rafʿ* mood: *wa almudarisūn*.

2) *Naṣb*: *dacawtu khālidan wa calī*
I invited Khalid and Ali.

The error is in the word *calī* in this sentence because it is *mactūf* on the word *khālidan* which is in the *naṣb* mood and *calī* also must be in the *naṣb* mood. Thus, the correct sentence should read; *khālidan wa calīyan*...

3) *Jarr* : ... *wa taḥadathū mac karim wa 'akhūh sāmī*.
I talked to Karim and his brother Sāmi.

4. *Macrifah and nakirah* *fa ṣadama jidaran wa 'al-shajarah*
and he hit a wall and a tree

The word *'al-shajarah* is *macrifah* definite and it should be indefinite because the *mactūf* is *nakirah (jidaran)*.

It seems that the reason behind errors in the conjunction component is that some students do not pay attention to the grammatical rules and some others just study them randomly and fail to use them properly in sentences. Moreover, if there is a long separation between the *cātif* and *mactūf* in the sentence, this leads to obscurity and, if the student does not go back to the *mactūf*, he will make a mistake in giving the inflection to the *cātif*.

7.7.12 *ʿIdāfa*

Table 7. 23

Frequency of types of *ʿIdāfa* component Errors (construct chain)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>ʿidāfa</i>				
47	22.92%	<i>mudāf</i> (adjunctive)	24	51.06
		<i>mudāfilayh</i> (genitive)	23	48.93

The *ʿidāfa* component does not have an equivalent grammatical component in English but the closest rule is that of “of construction”. What comes before it is *mudāf* “the adjunctive” and what comes after it, is *mudāf ʿilayh* (genitive).

Mudāf does not stick to a particular inflection case *ʿicrāb* as it may come in the *rafʿ*, *naṣb* or *jarr* according to its position in the sentence. But *mudāf ʿilyah* sticks to the *jarr* case all the time.

The above Table gives detailed statistics about the error frequency in the *'idāfa* component. 47 students made errors and they represent 22.92% of the students who made errors in all components. This component comes twelfth in the listing of components by error frequency (see Table No. 7.3).

In the ranking of usage grammatical components by the students *'idāfa* comes fifth, (see Table No.7.1). This contrast is, undoubtedly, a clear indicator that the students are good at this component. In the sub-component section in the above table, there are two cases for the *'idāfa* component:

- A. *-Mudāf*, (adjunctive) where 24 students made errors, representing 51.06% of the students who made errors in the *'idāfa* component.
- B. *-Mudāf' ilayh* (genitive) where 23 students made errors, representing 48.93%.

I noted, in my analysis of the students' writings, that the students' errors in the *'idāfa* component were of several kinds, as follows:

- . Not giving the *mudāf' ilayh* (the genitive) the related *jarr* mood
- . Keeping the *nūn* of sound masculine plural in the case of *mudāf*
- . Omitting *attacrif* from the *mudāf' ilayh*.

As the study methodology divided the *'idāfa* component into two main sections: *mudāf* and *mudāf' ilayh*, I will only give two examples of the sample students' writing.

1. *muḍāf*: *'ijtamaca lācibūn 'al fārīq maca mudaribihim*
The team players met with their coach

The student made an error by adding *nūn* to the sound masculine plural in the word (*lācibūn*) which is *muḍāf*. Correctly, it should read*'ijtamaca lācibū 'alfārīq*...

2. *muḍāf 'ilayh**fathahaba 'ila bayt al'akhawān sacūd wa sāmī*.....
He went to the house of the two brothers Saud and Sami.

The error is in the word *al'akhawān* which is *muḍāf 'ilayh*, because it is in the *raf'c* mood whereas it is supposed to be in the *jarr* mood because of *idāfa*. The student should say:
.....*bayt al'akhawayn*.....

Colloquial (slang) Arabic makes an error in the use of the *'idāfa* component and these errors were reflected in the students' writings, especially keeping the *nūn* of the sound masculine plural, as slang Arabic never omits the *nūn* whatever its inflection position is. The inability of the students to differentiate between *muḍāf 'ilayh* and *muḍāf* leads to their making errors.

7.7.13 *'Ism mawṣūl*

Table 7.24

Frequency of types of *'ism mawṣūl* component Errors (Relative Pronoun)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>'ism mawṣūl</i>				
41	20%	feminine number	18	43.90
		agreement	12	29.26
		masculine	11	26.82

'Ism almawṣūl resembles the relative pronoun in English such as , which, who, whom, that...to a great extent. It connects sentences and relates the parts of speech. The only difference is that in Arabic the *'ism mawṣūl* form differs according to the persons about whom we are talking, whether masculine or feminine, singular or plural. The students used the following formula of the *'ism mawṣūl*:

allathī: singular masculine *allati*: singular feminine

allathīna: plural masculine *allāti* : plural feminine

allathān: dual masculine *allatān* : dual feminine.

The above Table shows that the number of students who made errors in the component of *'ism mawṣūl* amounted to 41 representing 20%. The *'ism mawṣūl* component ranks fourteenth in frequency of error. See Table (7.3). In usage, this component ranks

thirteenth. See Table No. (7.1). There are three main sections listed under the sub-component column in Table No (7.24).

The first section is feminine: this means that the students failed to give the right gender and used the masculine relative pronoun for the feminine. The number of students who made this error amounted to 18, representing 43.40% of the total number of students who made errors in the *ism al mawsul* component. The following is an example of the students' writing while describing the wedding night:

... *kānat laylat 'azzwāj maliyāh bilbanāt allathīna raqasna ḥattā 'alfajr*
The wedding night was full of girls who danced till dawn.

The student talks here about girls who are feminine plural yet he used the relative pronoun (*allathīna*) which is used for the masculine plural. The right form of the relative pronoun is *allati*.

The second section: number agreement. This means that the student does not use the right relative pronoun when he talks about the singular , dual or the plural. The number of students who made errors in this section reached 12 representing 29.26%. The following is an example:

..... *fa'cā bintayh allātī najahna fi 'al 'imtiḥān hadiyah thamīnah*
he gave his two daughters, who passed the exam, valuable gifts.

In this example, the student talks about two girls but he used the relative pronoun, *allati*, which is used for the feminine plural whereas the feminine dual relative pronoun is *allatayn*.

The third section: masculine. This means that the student made an error by using the feminine relative pronoun for the masculine. The number of students who made this error amounted to 11 representing 26.82 %. The following is an example:

....'alghuraf allathīna tuṭillū cala'alḥadiqah...
The rooms which are next to the garden

In this example, the student talks about *'alghuraf* which is feminine plural and he used the relative pronoun (*'allathīna*) which is used for masculine plural. He should use the relative pronoun *'allātī* and say: (*'alghuraf allātī*).

7.7.14 *'Alḥāl*

Table 7.25

Frequency of types of *alḥāl* component errors (circumstantial accusative)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>'alḥāl</i>				
24	11.70%	<i>naṣb</i>	19	79.16
		gender	15	62.50

When Arabizing the terms of the Arabic grammar, some orientalist called the component of *'alḥāl* the “circumstantial accusative” (Baalabaki 1990:90). This name concentrates on the lexicon of *'alḥāl* in Arabic grammar rather than semantics and

meaning. It is well established that the closest component in English to *alḥāl* is the adverb, as *ʾalḥāl* in Arabic, like the adverb in English, describes the verb. Nevertheless, I have accepted the definition of the orientologists, following the famous saying: “There is no grudge in terminology”.

The above Table shows the results of the analysis of the errors in the component of *ʾalḥāl*. 24 students, or 11.70% made errors in this component. This frequency ranks fourteenth. The usage of this component ranks fifteenth with 930 occurrences. Regarding the sub-component column in Table No. (7.25) we note that there are two sections.

The first is *naṣb* where 19 students made errors representing 79.16%. *Naṣb* is the only case of the *ʾalḥāl* component. This means that the students who made errors put *alḥāl* in another mood like *rafc* or *jarr*. The following example is taken from the students’ writings:-

.....*fa thahaba Ṭāriq musric ʾilā madrasatih*.....
Tariq went to his school quickly.

The error is in the word *musric* because it is *ḥāl* and it must be in the *naṣb* mood so it should be *musrican*.

The second section is gender. This means that the student fails to give the right gender. For instance, if he talks about a number of women, *ʾal-ḥāl* must agree with the

women and be feminine. For example, one of the students wrote the following sentence talking about his sisters:

.....*wa jā'at 'akhwātī ilā wālidī masrūrīn*.....

My sisters came to my father happy.

The word *masrūrīn* (happy) is *ḥāl* and should be in the *naṣb* mood but the student wrote it wrongly as if he were describing men. The correct form of the word is *masrūrāt*.

From my analysis of the students' writings I noted that there are two factors leading to errors in *'alḥāl* component. First confusion between *'alḥāl* and *nact*. *'Alḥāl*, as previously said, describes the way of the verb, whereas the *nact* describes or modifies nouns. The latter follows the modified mood: *raf'c*, *naṣb* or *jarr* while the former is always in the *naṣb* mood.

The following two examples clarify the similarity between *nact* (adjective) and *'alḥāl* (adverb):

A. *Nact* : *Qadima aṭṭullāb 'al musricīn*
The fast students came.

B. *'Alḥāl*: *Qadima aṭṭullāb musricin*
The students came fast.

The inability to differentiate between *nact* and *'alḥāl* leads to errors in *'alḥāl*. Second colloquial Arabic does not show the *naṣb* inflection sign on *'alḥāl* and consequently this affects the student.

7.7.15 *'Ism 'ishārah*

Table 7.26

Frequency of types of *'ism 'ishārah* component errors (The Pointer Word)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>'ism 'ishārah</i>				
21	10.24	Gender	12	57.14
		number agreement	9	42.85

'ism 'ishārah was translated as pointer words by Baalabaki (1990: 384). This translation is literal and not understandable in grammatical terminology. The closest equivalent in English grammar is determinative pronoun or demonstrative pronoun. It seems that the orientalist avoided these terms because they contain the word pronoun which is translated into Arabic as *ḍamīr* (see the detailed analysis of the *ḍamīr* component in this chapter) when, in fact, they are nouns, not pronouns.

'Ism 'ishārah used by the students can be listed as follows:

Hāthā: this (masculine single), *hāthihī*: this (feminine single)

Thālika: that (masculine single), *tilka*: that (feminine single)

hathān: these (masculine dual), *Hātān*: these (feminine dual)

Ha 'wla'i: those (masculine & feminine plural), *thālikum*: those (masculine plural).

The number of students who made errors in the *'ism 'ishārah* component was 21 or 10.24%, as shown in the above table. This component ranks fifteenth in the error listing. It was used 2140 times and comes twelfth in the usage listing.

The sub-components are divided into two sections:

First: gender. This means that the student made an error in using *'ism 'ishārah* while talking about masculine or feminine. 13 students made errors, representing 57.14%. The following is an example of this type of error which was taken from one of students writing:

....*thālikum 'annisa' 'allāti sācadna ḥlfuqarā'*.
Those are the women who helped the poor

The error is in the word *thālikum* because it is the masculine plural, whereas the student is writing about the feminine plural and should say.*tilkum 'annisā'*.....

The second : wrong number. This means that the students made an error in using *'ism 'ishārah* by not paying attention to the number referred to; for example:

hātha : for singular

hāthān: for dual.

9 students made an error in this section, representing 42.85%.

The following is an example where a student is describing his emotions towards his father and mother.

.....*hā walā'i man nugadiruhum*.....
Those whom we respect.

The word *hā walā'i* is one of the demonstrative pronouns which is used to refer to the plural but the student used it to refer to the 'dual' as he was talking about two, namely his father and mother only.

From my analysis of the students' written work, I conclude that one of the principal reasons they make errors in the *'ism'ishārah* component, particularly in number and gender, is that colloquial Arabic does not use the demonstrative pronouns, except for *hāthihī* and *hāthā*. Moreover, there was a number of demonstrative pronouns in the text such as *tilkum* and *thaynik* which the students did not use at all, even incorrectly. This is another clear proof of the weakness of the students' grammar at the advanced stage of the secondary school.

7.7.16 *Tamyīz*

Table 7.27

Frequency of types of *tamyīz* component Errors (Specificative)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>tamyīz</i>				
21	10.24	<i>naṣb</i>	15	71.42
		number agreement	7	33.33

The orientalist translated the grammatical component *tamyīz* literally as "specificative" (Baalabaki 1990: 465). I think that this is an adequate term, being the closest to the Arabic as there is no equivalent component in English.

Tamyīz is always *nakirah* and its main function is to indicate what precedes it and in most cases it is in the *naṣb* mood. The above table shows that the number of students who made errors in *tamyīz* amounted to 21 or 10.24%. This component ranks sixteenth in the error listing. See Table (7.3). It comes twentieth as regards frequency of use.

There are two sections to the *tamyīz* component as detailed under the sub-component column in the above table. The first is the *naṣb*. *Nasb* is the mood of *tamyīz* in

in most cases yet some students made errors in this regard.

The following is an example:

...*shāraka macanā fi hāthihī arrihlah thalāthūna ṭālib...*
Thirty students participated in this trip

tamyīz here is the word *ṭālib* but the student made an error by not putting the word *ṭālib* in the *naṣb* mood. The phrase should read.....*thalāthūna ṭāliban...*

15 students made an error in this section representing 71.42%.

The second section is number agreement. This means disagreement between *tamyīz* and the counted object. Here is an example which was written by one of the students:

...*akhathtu macī khamsīna riyālāt...*
I took with me fifty Riyals.

This student made an error when he used the word *riyālāt* which is a plural form of *tamyīz* whereas he is supposed to use the singular as the Arabic rules of grammar provide that, in the numbers above 9, *tamyīz* should be opposite to the counted object, i.e. singular. The correct word is *riyālan*. 7 students made errors in this section representing 33.33%.

Slang has undoubtedly made its impact on the students' writing in the incorrect usage of *tamyīz* as the colloquial dialect never puts *tamyīz* in the *naṣb* mood. The difference between the rule for *tamyīz* for numbers from three to nine and for numbers greater than nine also causes confusion to some students.

Table 7.28

Frequency of types of dharf component errors (adverb)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
Adverb				
18	8.78	<u>dharf zamān</u> (adverb of time)	12	66.66
		<u>dharf makān</u> (adverb of place)	8	44.44

This grammatical component has two definitions in Arabic: dharf (which we adopted in this study) and mafacūl fih. The first is the most commonly used. As for its translation into English as adverb, this information was taken from the “Directory of Linguistic Terms” by Baalabaki (1990: 33). However, Baalabaki did not indicate whether this translation was made by orientalist or not.

The main function of dharf is to be either an adverb of time or an adverb of place with the meaning fī (in) indicating the time or the place of the verb. It is always in the *nasb* mood.

The above table shows that 18 or 8.78% of the students made errors in *ḍharf*. This puts it in seventeenth place in the error listing. See Table (7.3). There are two main sections under the sub-component column of *ḍharf* cases:

The first section is *ḍharf zamān*. The best translation, referred to by Baalabaki, is adverb of time (ibid: 33). This type has the meaning “*fī*” (in) as it indicates the time of the verb and includes the adverbs of time, such as: night, day, evening, morning...etc. The number of students who made errors in the usage of *ḍharf zamān* amounted to 12 or 55.66%. The following example was written by one of the students:

ṣirtu mahmūman layl wa nahār
I remained upset day and night.

The error lies in *layl* and *nahār* as they are an adverb of time but the student did not put them in the *naṣb* mood. He should say: *laylan wa nahāran*.

The second section is *ḍharf makān* which was translated as adverb of place (ibid: 33). This type indicates where the verb takes place and includes the directions.

Fawq: above, *taht*: below, *yamīn*: right, *shimāl* : left, *ʿamām*: front, *warāʾ*: behind...etc.

The following is an example of such an error.

.....*mashaytu miyl wa niṣf*
I walked a mile and half.

The word *miyl* is the *ḍharf makān*, adverb of place, as it indicates where the verb takes place, but the student did not put it in the *naṣb* mood. The correct word is *miylan*.

From my review of the treatment of the *ḍharf* rule in the school textbooks I have concluded that there are some details or sub-sections that the students have not understood. In addition, the colloquial dialect has had an impact on their style as this does not put the adverb in the *naṣb* mood at all.

7.7.18 *Mafcūl mutlaq*

Table 7.29

Frequency of types of *mafḥūl mutlaq* component errors (Congent Object)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>mafḥūl mutlaq</i>				
11	5.36%	Actual substitution	7 4	63.63 36.36

mafḥūl mutlaq was translated by Baalabaki as cognate Object (Baalabaki 1990:96) or in another place, as absolute object (Ibid 24). We do not pay much attention to the difference in translation but note here the fact that the component of *mafḥūl mutlaq* is to be found in Semitic languages. *Mafḥūl mutlaq* is an abstract noun - mostly derived from its verb to affirm the verb or to show its type or number. For instance in *ḍarabtuḥū ḍarban* (I hit him) the word *ḍarban* is derived from its verb, *ḍaraba*. Similarly in English one might say "I dreamt a dream".

The above Table shows that students' errors in the *mafḥūl muṭlaq* component amounted to 11 or 5.36%. In the error listing this component comes eighteenth amongst the twenty two components see Table No. (7.3). It ranks nineteenth as regards usage with 460 occurrences.

There are two sections for the absolute object under the sub-component column, as shown in the above table. The first section is actual. This means that the *mafḥūl muṭlaq* is an apparent abstract noun derived from its verb and there is no replacement for *mafḥūl muṭlaq* is used in other words. It is shown and not hidden in the sentence. 7 students made errors in this section representing 63.63%.

The following is an example:

...*fa catabanī mudarissī citāb shadīd*....
.. my teacher blamed me very strongly.

The error is in the word *citāb* because it was not put in the *naṣb* mood though it is an abstract noun which is used to affirm its verb *cātaba*. It should be *citāban*. The second section is substitution. This means that the *mafḥūl muṭlaq*, which is derived from its verb, may not appear in the sentence, but may be replaced with its adjective, pronoun, synonym, type, number or device and also *kull* and *baḥd* when added to the abstract noun *maṣḍar*. All these are called substitutions to the *mafḥūl muṭlaq* and take the same mood, *naṣb*.

4 students made errors under this section representing 36.36%.

The following is an example of such an error:

...*qultū li 'aṣḍiqā' i : kulū hanī' marī'*....
...I said to my friends; enjoy your food.

The word *hanī'* is the adjective of the omitted *mafḥūl mutlaq* as the real sentence should read: *kulū ākḥān hanī'an* but the student did not put the substitution of *mafḥūl mutlaq* in the *naṣb* mood. The correct phrase should read: *hanī'an*.

The students' results in the absolute object *mafḥūl mutlaq* are good as only 11 students out of 120 made errors. However, we have to stress here the fact that the colloquial dialect, which never puts the absolute object in the *naṣb* mood, has negatively influenced the students' usage of the *mafḥūl mutlaq* component.

7.7.19 *ʾAsmā' alkhamsah*

Table 7.30

Frequency of types of *ʾasmā' alkhamsah* component errors (the five nouns)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components errors committors	Percentage %
<i>ʾAsmā' alkhamsah</i>				
5	2.43%	<i>naṣb</i>	2	40
		<i>Jarr</i>	2	40
		<i>rafḥ</i>	1	20

ʾAsmā' alkhamsah are *ʾabū*, *ʾakhū*, *fū*, *thū*, and *ḥamū*. They mean the following: *ʾabū*: father, *ʾakhū*: brother, *ḥamū*: brother-in-law, *fū*: mouth, *thū*: used to describe someone or something (similar to relative pronouns). They are called *ʾasmā' alkhamsah*

(five nouns) because they all share the same *'icrāb* rule, namely ; the indicative mood *rafʿ* by *wāw*, the subjunctive mood *naṣb* by *'alif* and the genitive mood *jarr* by *ya*. Like the majority of other grammatical components, they have no counterpart in English. I noticed that students used only three of them namely *'abū*, *'akhū*, and *thū*. This is logical enough because these three nouns are more commonly used than *fū* and *ḥamū* even by professional writers and editors.

The above Table shows that five students representing 2.43% of the total number of the students who made errors in all grammatical components, made errors in *'asmā' alkhamṣah*, which ranks 20th in the error listing (see Table 7.3). This component was used 267 times, which puts it 22nd in the usage of frequency listing. The table also includes statistical information on the sub-components which are divided into three sections:

The first is *naṣb* : *'asmā' alkhamṣah* are put in the *naṣb*, subjunctive, mood ending with *'alif*. Some students made errors in providing the *naṣb* sign when the five nouns were a topic of *'inna* or an object. Two students made errors in this section, representing 40% of the total number of students who committed errors in this component.

The following sentence is quoted from the writing of one of the students of the sample:

....*wa qad dacutu ṣadiqī wa 'akhūhū sulaymān.*
and I invited my friend and his brother Sulayman.

The word *'akhūhū* is one of the five nouns which is put in the *naṣb* mood as it is attracted to *mafcūl bih*, namely *ṣadiqī*. However, the student put the word *'akhūhū* in the *rafʿ* mood whereas it should be *wa 'akhāhu*.

The second is *jarr*: *'asmā' alkhamsah* are put in the *jarr* mood ending with *yā'* when they occur as *maf'ūl bih* or after a preposition. Two students made errors in this section representing 40% of the students who made errors in the components of *'asmā' alkhamsah*. The following is an example of an error in *jarr* mood:

...*Li 'annahū kāna rafīqa 'abūh.*
...because he was his father's close friend.

The word *'abūh* is wrong because the student put it in the *raf'c* mood whereas it should be placed in the *jarr* mood for it is *muḍāf' ilayh*. So, the correct form is *rafīqa 'abih*.

The third is *raf'c*. *'asma' alkhamsah* are placed in the *raf'c* mood ending with *wāw* when they occur as *mubtada*, *khavar*, *'ism kana*, *khavar'inna*....etc. Only one student made an error in this component. He wrote the following phrase:

..*inna cumar thā makānah cāliyah*.....
Umar is in a high position.

The word *thā* looks as if it is put in the *naṣb* mood which is incorrect. It must be in the *raf'c* mood as it is *khavar'inna* and read like this *thū*.

Ignorance of the rule of *'asmā' alkhamsah* leads to errors, particularly as they have three cases - as we clarified above. Moreover, the colloquial dialect often puts *'al' asmā' alkhamsah* in the *raf'c* mood which negatively influenced a number of students.

7.7.20 *Badal*

Table 7.31

Frequency of types of *badal* component errors (apposition)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>Badal</i>				
5	2.43%	<i>rafç</i>	2	40
		<i>naşb</i>	2	40
		<i>Jarr</i>	1	20

“Apposition” is the translation of the word *badal* which Baalabaki used on his dictionary (Baalabaki 1990:63). He did not mention whether this translation was authorised by orientalists. If I did not know this dictionary has been authorised by many establishments concerned with Arabic, I would have entitled the *badal* component:

“substitution” as it is syntactically the closest word. *Badal* signifies a word which is the intended follower and is preceded by an introductory word that is not intended per se. I give this example in English for the sake of clarity:

I believe in the lord of the whole universe, the Lord of Mohammed and Jesus, peace be upon them.

The second “Lord” is called a *badal*. It is intended for itself and is preceded by the word “Lord” which is not intended.

The above Table shows that 5 students, or 2.43% made errors in the *badal* component. It thus ranks 20th in the error listing (see Table 7.3). It is 16th in the frequency of use of grammatical components. (see Table 7.1)

As the above table demonstrates, there are three moods of the sub-components: The first is *rafʿ* where 2 students made errors representing 40% of the students who made errors in the *badal* component. Here is an example:

Hathā huwā ʾaddalīl, khātaman cala alʾard
This is the evidence, a ring on the floor.

The error lies in the word *khātaman* which is the *badal*. It is placed in the *naṣb* mood though it is *badal* of the word *addalīl* which is put in the *rafʿ* mood. The *badal* always takes the rule of *ʾal-mubdal minh* in *rafʿ*, *naṣb* and *jarr*.

The second is *naṣb*. Two students made errors here representing 40%. The following sentence is an example of the errors of one of the students.

kāna mantharan jamīlan, shābb yuṭī, ṣadaqah lilfaqīr.
It was a beautiful picture: a young man is donating to the poor.

The student made an error in the word *shābb* because it is *badal*. He did not place it in the *naṣb* mood. If he had applied the rule, the word would have been *shābban*.

The third is *jarr*. Only one student made an error here representing 20% of the students who made errors in *badal*. The following is the one and only example:

ʾInnī ʾāsafu li shabābin cātil, jāddūn fī tad̄yic ʾawqātihim
I am sorry for some youth, ^{habitu} ~~ude~~ in wasting their time.

The word *jāddūn* is a *badal* in the *rafʿ* mood though the *mubdal minh*, *shababin*, is placed in the *jarr* mood. This is not correct because *badal* must take the rule of *mubdal minh*. Consequently the correct *ʾicrāb* is *jāddīn*.

Errors in *badal* can be made due to the difficulty of recognising it in the sentence. Some students might think that it is a beginning of a sentence and deal with it as *mubtadā* and *khobar*. Others might confuse it with *mafʿūl bih*. It is one of the subtle components and students find it difficult to choose the correct declension.

7.7.21 *Mafcūl li 'ajlih*

Table 7.32

Frequency of types *mafḥūl li 'ajlih* component errors (causative object)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>mafḥūl li 'ajlih</i>	0.97%	<i>naṣḥ</i>	2	100
2				

Orientalists call it causative object (Baalabaki 1990: 85) which is a logical name because it is an object that clarifies the cause of something. In Arabic it is an infinitive used to demonstrate the cause of the action. It is placed in *naṣḥ* or *jarr* moods.

The above Table shows that only two students made errors in the component. They represent 0.95% of the total number of the students who committed errors in grammatical components. This component comes 21st in both the error listing and in the frequency of use listing, with 370 occurrences. Although there are two cases of *'icrāb* of *mafḥūl li 'ajlih* - namely *jarr* and *naṣḥ*, errors were made only in the *naṣḥ* case, and therefore the percentage is 100% of the students who made errors in the component of *mafḥūl li 'ajlih*. The following example is selected from the writing of one of the two students:

.....*facaltu thhālika'ikrām liṣadāqatina*.....
 ... I have done it to respect our friendship.....

The word *'ikrām*, is *mafḥūl li'ajlih*, but the student made an error when he did not place it in the *naṣb* mood. The correct form is *'ikrāman*.

Since colloquial dialect does not give *mafḥūl li'ajlih* a specific sign, this may have an influence on the students' style. However, the general result of using this component is still good, for only two students committed errors in it.

7.7.22 *Sharḥ*

Table 7 . 33

Frequency of types of *sharḥ* component errors (conditional style)

No of Errors Committors	Percentage %	Sub-components	No of sub-components Errors committors	Percentage %
<i>Sharḥ</i>				
1	0.48%	addition of (<i>fa</i>)		100%

The conditional style in Arabic is similar to “if” in English except that the Arabic language is distinguished by the variety of conditional styles and articles. The above Table shows that only one student made errors in the conditional style representing 0.48%

of the total number of the students who made errors in the *sharṭ* component. It is thus the lowest ranked component in error frequency (see Table No. 7.3).

It also occupies the 22nd place in the frequency of usage of grammatical components with 153 occurrences (see Table No. 7.1).

In the sub-components column in the above Table, there is only one case, namely addition of *fā*; if the statement is nominal or if it is joined with *qad* or *sawfā*,.....etc. Only one student made an error here, in the following sentence:

Qāla alwālidu li waladīh : itha najāhta sawfa musāfir 'ila 'abhā.
The father said to his son : if you pass the exam we will travel to Abha.

The conditional is the word *sawfā* and what follows, and the article is *ithā*. The error lies in the fact that he did not link *fā* with *sawfā*. The rule says that if the conditional is linked with *sawfā* or *fā* must be linked with it so as to be *fasawfa*.

7.8 General linguistic errors

At the beginning of this chapter we mentioned that the results of the pilot study divided students' errors into two parts:

1. Grammatical errors
2. General linguistic errors

The results of the first part were analysed in the previous pages. This was in fact, the main part as it covers the majority of grammatical components in the rules of Arabic where students made errors.

The second part (general linguistic errors) is concerned with the errors that could not be incorporated into one of the grammatical components. However, they are errors in the Arabic language. One of the students, for instance, wrote the following sentence:

'Ishtara wālidi tilifzyūnan kabīran
My father bought a big television.

From the point of view of *'icrāb*, the word *tilifzyūnan* seems correct, if the rule of *mafcūl bih* in Arabic is applied, as it is placed in the *naṣb* mood. However, it is incorrect because *tilifzyūnan* is a foreign word, and the Arabic dictionary contains many alternatives with the same meaning. This linguistic error cannot be incorporated into a specific grammatical component, and is not a writing error, which have been excluded from this study. However, it remains a linguistic error that cannot be ignored or forgotten. I noticed that most of the researches that specialised in analysing grammatical errors overlooked the analysis of linguistic errors in their methodologies (Al Sayed: 1972, Al-Husaini: 1980, Abu Shu'ayshi: 1981). This is why I decided to allocate a separate section to deal with the analysis of general linguistic errors. These errors are classified in the following categories:-

1. Insertion of unnecessary words
2. Slang words
3. Incomplete sentences
4. Slang expressions
5. Foreign words
6. Wrong translation

7. Word usage
8. Double negation.

It is worth noting that the methodology adopted in observing and analysing general linguistic errors is different from the method of analysing grammatical errors (see Chapter Six). For the latter, I observed errors in the usage of the grammatical component and calculated their frequency. The same method cannot be applied to observing and analysing general linguistic errors. It is easy, for example to calculate the error frequency in the component of *nact* in a students' writing by observing his errors in relation to the number of times he uses the component. (see Table 7.17). However, we cannot carry out the same procedure in observing error frequency in general linguistic errors. For instance, we cannot calculate the errors in (foreign words) as a proposition of the student's usage of Arabic words in his writing. This is equally true for the rest of the general linguistic errors.

Table 7 . 34

Frequency of general linguistic Errors and their percentage

Sequence	Types of errors	No of errors	percentage	No of errors committors	Percentage %
1	Insertion of unnecessary words	317	25.63	164	80
2.	Slang words	289	23.38	133	64.87
3.	Incomplete sentences	192	15.53	96	46.82
4.	Slang expression	145	11.73	71	34.63
5.	Foreign words	123	9.95	45	21.95
6.	Wrong translation	98	7.92	38	18.53
7.	Words usage	51	4.12	36	17.56
8.	Double negation	21	1.69	11	5.36
	Total	1236	100%		

Consequently, for the analysis of general linguistic errors I concentrated on the percentage of error committors. The percentage was arrived at by observing all the general linguistic errors of each student, counting the total number of error committors in each type and then calculating the percentage of error committors in a certain component in relation to the gross number of students (for more details see Chapter Six).

The percentage of error frequency is useful from the statistical point of view. In each type of general linguistic error, we learn the number of errors and their percentage

in relation to the total number of errors in all types. More useful still, the results of the analysis displayed a sort of harmony between the percentage of error committers and the percentages of errors. Slang expressions, for instance, occupied fourth place in the proportion of error frequency and the proportion of error committers. This is unlike the research of Qinawi (1990) where the results demonstrated a discrepancy between the percentages of error committers and the percentages of errors themselves.

General Linguistic Errors are classified in eight categories. They are as follows, according to the order of error percentages.

7.8.1 Insertion of unnecessary words

This indicates that a number of students inserted some unnecessary words into sentences, thus deviating from the correct style of expression in Arabic. 164 students made errors of this type representing 80% of the gross number of students. 317 errors were committed representing 25.63% of the gross number of errors. The most common error amongst students in this type is the usage of what is called in Arabic *'aḥcāl musāciḍah* (accessory verbs). There are two main verbs used by students, namely:

1. *Qāma*. When used incorrectly it looks like this:

Qama(accessory verb)+*fācil*(actor)+preposition+*maṣdar*(infinitive)
+*muḍāf 'ilayh*(genative).

The following is an example makes this explicit. One of the students wrote:

qāma wālidi bi zyārati jarinnā bacda alḥādith
My father went to visit our neighbour after the incident.

The verb *qāma* is unnecessary in the sentence and is absolutely out of place. The sentence would have been correct grammatically and semantically as follows:

Zāra wālidī jarana bacda alḥādith

2. The verb (*tamma*). A number of the students of the sample inserted it unnecessarily and made errors in using. When *tamma* is used incorrectly it looks as follows:

Tamma (accessory verb) + *Maḍsar* (infinitive) + *muḍāf ilayh* (genitive). The following sentence is an example:

Wa tamma binā' albaytī fi muddah wajīzah.....
and the house was built in a short time.

The accessory verb *tamma* is completely unnecessary. The sentence, however, remains correct grammatically and semantically if the passive voice is adopted, as in the following sentence:

...Wa buniya albayt fi muddah wajīzah.....

It is worth mentioning that when we say that students make errors by inserting unnecessary words into the sentences, we do not refer to any word without which the meaning remains correct. If we intended this, many correct expressions would be branded wrong. Rather, we mean only unnecessary words that deviate from correct Arabic style.

I have noticed that this type of error, namely the insertion of unnecessary words, especially the use of accessory verbs like *qāma* and *tamma*, has pervaded audio-

visual and written mass media. It has also extended to men of letters and educationalists, and so to find it in students' writings is far from strange. Slang dialect, then, is not responsible for school students making these errors.

7.8.2 Slang words

This is the second type of general linguistic error. I observed slang words incorporated in the writings of the students who were the focus of this study. This type of error clarifies the importance of studying general linguistic errors. The student may insert a slang word in a sentence that looks grammatically sound whereas the word itself is not acceptable in Arabic. So, it is not logical to accept it even if the grammatical rule is applied. This type of error reminds us of a football team whose strip is yellow and blue. If the referee finds one of the players wearing green and white, he will not accept him, even if he is a professional.

The number of students who used slang words was 133, representing 64.87% of the gross number of students. There were 289 errors representing 23.38% of the total number of general linguistic errors. The following sentence is a sample quoted from the writing of one student:

..wa rafaḍat azzawāj li 'annahū kharrāt...
she refused the marriage because he was a liar.

The word *kharrāt* is incorrect. It means 'liar' but, in the Arabic lexicon, this word does not exist. The equivalent word in sound classical Arabic is *kāthib*. If we look again at this example, we find that the student did not make an error in applying the grammatical rule.

The word is in the *naṣb* mood as it is *ʿism ʿinna* (for more details, see the error analysis of the component of *ʿinna* and its sisters in this chapter). But, because he used a slang word, it is nonsensical to apply the grammatical rule.

The issue of slang and its influence on students' writings will remain a deep-seated dilemma unless the student has a considerable wealth of classical vocabulary. Otherwise, there will be a gap which he cannot fill except by using slang words.

7.8.3 Incomplete sentence

This is the third type of general linguistic error. Through my analysis of students' writings, I have noticed the existence of a number of incomplete sentences. For example, there is a sentence with *mubtada* but without *khobar*. Another may contain *ʿism ʿinna* and its sisters or *ʿism kāna* and its sisters without the *khabr*. Conditional sentences may also contain a conditional verb without the answer to the condition.

Undoubtedly, incomplete sentences lead to deep confusion in the understanding of the meaning and leave the reader perplexed as he finds himself obliged to re-read once more in search of the missing link.

As the title of this type of linguistic error suggests, it cannot be included with any of the grammatical components analysed at the beginning of this chapter. This is due to the fact that the problem of incomplete sentences is a common denominator among several grammatical components and thus must be dealt with as a separate component.

Table No. (7.34) shows that the number of error committers in incomplete sentences is 96 representing 46.82% of the 205 students of the sample. The number of errors amounts to 142 representing 15.53% of the total number of general linguistic errors.

As I mentioned beforehand, the error of incomplete sentences occurs in many grammatical components. However, it is enough to mention one of them only, namely *kana* and its sisters. One of the students wrote the following sentence:

*kāna 'aba 'una wa 'ajdaduna wallathinna cāshū
ḥayātan mali 'ah bil matācib wa almashākil*

Our fathers and grandfathers who experienced difficult life
full of hardships and problems.

The verb *kana* needs *'ism* and *khobar*. The *'ism* in this sentence is mentioned, namely *'aba 'una*, but the *khobar* is not found, thus the sentence is incomplete, obscure and not understandable as is clear from the translation into English.

It is important in this context to mention that the Arabic rules of grammar accept the omission of some parts of the sentence, such as *mubtada* or *khobar*. Moreover, Arabic grammar accepts that the *fācil* may be an implied pronoun, but there must be some specific conditions. However, the incomplete sentences listed in the students' writing did not meet such conditions.

One reason behind the students' making errors of this type (incomplete sentences) might be the fact that the student does not carefully revise what he writes and this leads to his writing incomplete sentences because of the loss of one of the elements. Alternatively, the reason could be that the student sometimes writes a long sentence in which he uses, for instance, the relative pronoun and he forgets the more important part which is at the beginning of the sentence which needs suitable completion, as seen in the previous example. The word *wallathīna* is a relative pronoun which was followed by a complete sentence consisting of (*fīl* and *fācil*), but it is not the intended complete sentence; rather it is a subordinate modifier. Thus the absence of *khabar kāna* led to the non-completion of the sentence.

7.8.4 Slang expression

This is the fourth type of general grammatical error. I stress the importance of distinguishing between slang words and slang expressions. The former is related to colloquial words that have no origin in Arabic. These have been discussed above. The latter, slang expression, is different as it concentrates on expressions rather than words. The sentence wording could be correct but the expression itself is colloquial and thus cannot be accepted as correct Arabic expression. As is the case in English, here are colloquial words, such as the verb (bust) in the following example:

he was busted for having drugs:
which means that he was arrested.

Here is another slang expression where the wording is correct:

I will be damned if I will

All the words included in his sentence are meaningful and correct and free of slang, yet the expression is considered slang and is unacceptable in writing or oratory. The number of students who made errors in slang expressions was 71 representing 34.63% of the total sample students. The number of errors amounted to 145 representing 11.73% of the total errors in the general grammatical components.

Finding an error in (slang expressions) is much more difficult than discovering an error in (slang words) because slang words are known and if there is any doubt, the dictionary is consulted as an authority. Identification of slang expressions, on the other hand, requires extraordinary effort and good knowledge of all the colloquial and classical styles. Therefore it is sometime necessary to refer to, and obtain the help of some specialists to decide whether the judgement is correct or not.

The following example is taken from the writing of one of the sample students who used slang expressions:

faghāḍiba ʾalmudrris cala ʾattālib fa ʾactāhu kaffan cala wajjih
The teacher was angry at the student and gave him a slap on his face.

The phrase *fa ʾactahu kaffan* is a slang expression unacceptable in official writing and schools even though the words of the sentence are correct. If the student used the word *ṣafcah* which means a slap the expression would be correct. Undoubtedly colloquial dialect has a strong influence on the style of a number of students and thus its expressions are reflected in their writings. The lack of reading serious books and useful articles perhaps leads to this weakness in the writing style.

7.8.5 Foreign words

Any foreign word found in the students' writing is considered an error in this study. A student may apply the grammatical rule to the foreign word as regards *rafʿ*, *naṣb* or *jarr* but this does not absolve the student from having committed a grammatical error. Arabic is a cohesive whole and if the student breaches the grammar rules of Arabic we consider it an error; likewise, it is an error if the student uses a foreign word.

The number of students who used foreign words in their writings was 45 representing 21.95% of the total number of students in this study (205 students). The number of foreign words used amounted to 123 representing 9.95% of the total errors in the general grammatical components. The following sentence is an example of one of the students writings:

fa'akhathnā rāduwan li mutābacat akhbār ḥarb 'alkhalīj
We took a radio to follow up the news of the Gulf war.

The word *rāduwan* represents the error as it is foreign, coined from the English radio. The student has no excuse for making this error because there is an equivalent in Arabic which is *mithyāc*. You find here that the student applied the grammatical rule to the word *rāduwan* as it is in the *naṣb* case, nonetheless it is an error because the word is foreign.

I may not always agree with those people who try to find excuses and justifications for students' errors, but the error in using foreign words is understandable for two reasons. The first is this: due to the tremendous technological progress in Western countries, such foreign words have invaded Arabic and the proper equivalent for such foreign terms has not been provided. The second is that even though Arabic assemblies

have rendered good efforts in Arabicizing many foreign words, they were unable to keep pace with the speed of the invasion and spread of foreign words. Take for instance the fax machine and its growing use among people. The Arabic Assembly made an equivalent but this never gained widespread acceptance.

7.8.6 Wrong translation

This means that the translations of the foreign cultures of Europe and other countries have contributed to creating a flaw in Arabic expressions. Claude Hakage was quoted as saying

The civilisation challenges of other civilisations have their undeniable influences on the Arabic nation's culture. The language is in a front-line, facing the increasing pressure of foreign language that are cloaked with foreign terms and conceptions. Researchers have proved that words in some languages have changed as a result of the pressure of foreign languages. Some researchers have justified the simplification process and extinction of grammatical formula caused in a number of languages by the changes visited on the cultures of native speakers of these languages (Hakage, 1988 :23).

Abdultawab (1967) reported that Al-Yazigy has drawn attention to the effect of translation on the contemporary Arabic language and he sees that some phrases are but literal translations from the English. The following is an example of such a translation:

'undhur 'in kāna zayd fi 'addār
see if Zayed at home (p.323).

Here, there is a point that is worth noting, namely, we must not be fanatical nor careless about the styles coined from foreign languages. It is not acceptable to refuse innovation in style only because it is emanating from a foreign language. As long as such a

style does not contain a foreign word then it could be acceptable. At the same time, it is not permissible to accept easily any style because some translated expressions do not agree with or suit the Arabic language and its grammatical rules. This is an opinion which I support. The number of students who made errors in wrong translation was 38, representing 18.23% of the total sample students. The number of errors was 98, representing 7.92% of the total errors in the general grammatical components. The following is an example of an error in wrong translation:

'anā ka muwāṭin mukhliṣ lā budda 'an aḥmī baladī
as a sincere citizen I must protect my country.

The letter *ka* is used in Arabic only to form a simile. However, in the cited example the student is not forming a simile and therefore using the *ka* in this context is an error. What has happened in translation is that as has been translated directly into Arabic where it acts only to form a simile and cannot be used causatively.

It is clear that the students make these errors due to the tremendous quantity of foreign translations, some of which are made by non-specialist translators who only care to convey the meaning and disregard the breach of Arabic language.

7.8.7 Word usage

This means that the student may use the word (in the wrong context) without its original denotation in Arabic. The sentence may seem correct regarding the application of Arabic rules of grammar and be free of foreign words or expressions but it is unacceptable because its lexical semantics are far removed from what the writer wants to convey. Here is an example by the author of a Dictionary of Common Language Errors:

La 'afcaluhū qatt
I don't do it at all

The author points out that *qatt* is an adverb of time which negates the whole past tense. In the above example it was not used to mean time and this is an error (Al-Adnani 1980 :207). The word *qatt* in the above example is classical Arabic and it is structurally correct but its meaning in the sentence is incorrect.

I confronted a problem while determining errors in word usage. The sentence may seem correct grammatically and structurally, but there may be a particular error that can only be determined by a precise reading of the student's writing so as to know the meaning he wants to convey through the words and how far he succeeds in choosing the appropriate lexicon. For instance, one of the sample students wrote the following sentence:

faqad shāraknāhum 'atrāḥahum
we have participated in their unhappiness.

A quick look at the sentence may not reveal any error, either grammatical or structural. However, as the student was talking about a happy wedding party it is not reasonable to say about such a happy occasion that he participated in their unhappiness. The word *'atrah* in Arabic means unhappiness, and is the opposite of happiness. This example shows how difficult it is to uncover such mistakes as the researcher must be fully aware and have a complete background to the subject the student is dealing with.

The reasons for such errors is the desire of the student to show that he has lexical wealth. This leads him to choose some words that are not commonly used, and he sometime fails to realise the real meaning of the word.

7.8.8 Double negation

There is a rule in Arabic grammar which says that when you negate a negative verb you affirm it. There is a similar rule in English which is called double negation. Double negatives appear in English slang as in the following sentence:

I don't know nothing.

The difference between the use of the two negations is that double negation changes the meaning completely as the negation becomes affirmative according to the rule. The English double negation does not change the meaning but breaks the rule and the style seems very weak. The following example is taken from the writing of one of the students:

Lastū lā ʾaḥibb ʾassafar kathīran
I don't like too much travelling

In this example there are two negative particles *laysa* and *lā*. This style illustrates two points: (1) weakness of style (2) confusion of the meaning. The ordinary reader will be confused and he will not know at first glance whether the writer likes travelling or not. As the rule says that negating the negative is affirmative; it seems as if he is saying 'I like travelling'. In fact, this is not what the student wanted to say. What he wrote on this subject shows that he does not like travelling but he used two negative particles and confused the meaning.

Table No.(7.34) shows that the number of students who committed errors in double negation amounted to 11 representing 5.36% of the total sample students (205 students). The number of errors was 21, representing 1.69% of the total errors in the general grammatical components.

The number of the students and the number of errors they made may not provoke worry due to the low percentage, but we must be aware of the reasons lying behind such errors especially if we know that such errors are remarkably noticeable especially in the media. It could be that the close and intimate contact of the students with media has contributed to affecting the writing of students.

7.9 Concluding remarks

As expected, the analysis of the students' writings revealed weaknesses in respect of most of the grammatical components. According to the formula of error rates which was used in the study, it was found that in 13 out of 22 components, the students showed common writing errors.

Regarding the basic grammatical components (Table No. 7.8), considered by the majority of researchers in this field as essential for students at this stage to know, the study results indicate that students made errors in 15 grammatical components. When a comparison was made between the frequency of use of the grammatical components and error rate it was confirmed that a correlation existed between the two for most of the grammatical components considered.

This chapter analysed in detail the results of this study in relation to the error types associated with each grammatical component. This analysis will be very useful in determining the weak points of the students in each of the grammatical components.

Suggested reasons for the types of error in each of the components were given, because the researcher believes that by understanding the source and nature of errors, the most suitable remedies can be found and applied.

The next chapter will highlight in summary form the main results of this study, and their implications for practice and implication for future studies.

Chapter Eight

Summary, Conclusions and Implications for Practice and Further Research

Chapter Eight

Summary, Conclusions and Implications for Practice and Further Research

8.1 Preface

This investigation was designed with a view to contributing to our knowledge of the Arabic grammatical errors found in the written work of third grade students in Saudi high schools. No such research has, as far as we are aware, been carried out in Saudi high schools. Educationists stress the value of language research which can produce valuable insight into the way learners use Arabic grammar. The identification of errors made by different learners and a description of the kinds of errors made by these learners provide a better characterisation of language communication and the influences affecting it (Mijawer 1974:89).

A study of errors is a means of revealing what the learner has yet to learn. It is hoped that the results and discussion presented in this study will be of some value and interest to Arabic grammar learners, teachers of grammar and to the relevant authorities at the Ministry of Education. We shall now present a summary of the results, conclusions and implications for practice and further research.

The main purpose of the study was to identify and analyse the types and frequencies of grammatical error made in the written work of third grade students in Saudi high schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This study set out to answer the following questions (Nos 1 and 2 are the main questions):

1) What are the grammatical components in which third year high school male students often make errors? This question has two parts:

(i) What is the percentage of the students who make errors?

(ii) What is the percentage of frequency of the grammatical errors?

(2) What are the general linguistic errors and what is their frequency?

(3) What are the grammatical components which students used in their writing? And what is their frequency?

(4) What is the difference between the basic grammatical components as seen by specialists and the grammatical components highlighted by this study?

(5) What are the possible reasons which cause students to make both grammatical and general linguistic errors?

(6) How do we compare frequency of the use of grammatical components and the frequency of making errors?

(7) What recommendations can be made to remedy the problem of students making grammatical errors?

8.2 Subjects and materials

Two hundred and five students from four public high schools in Riyadh city were selected as the subject of the study. The four schools were selected carefully in order to represent different social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

The research instrument was a written test. Students were tested twice on two different topics: a directed topic and a free topic. This method enabled the students to write about different experiences. Instructions were distributed to the students as explained in detail in Chapter Six.

The test was administered after permission was given by the General Department of Education at the Ministry of Education in Riyadh (See Chapter Six and Appendix No.1).

After receiving the students' written work, the number of errors in each specific grammatical component was tabulated, counted and their frequency was calculated.

8.3 Limitations of the study

1. This study is restricted to common grammatical errors committed by third year secondary school students in their written compositions only. It excludes the spoken language which I believe requires other research, because it needs different methods of sampling and data collection.
2. It is an attempt at identifying, classifying and analysing grammatical errors and general linguistic errors only. Other types of errors met in this research, which are not relevant to the study, such as punctuation, spelling or composition errors such as coherence, were not included in the analysis.
3. This study is limited to the secondary schools established and administered by the Ministry of Education. Private schools and secondary schools administered by Imam Mohammed bin Saud University are not included as they have a different curriculum and syllabus.

4. In the education system in Saudi Arabia there is no co-education due to religions and cultural values and it is difficult therefore to contact female schools and administer the test in their classes. Therefore this study is limited to boys' schools, in particular third-year high schools.

5. As there is a possibility of interference from the varieties of colloquial Arabic in the usage of the classical language, this study is limited to one dialect area, Najd (Central Region), so that the dialectal factor can be held constant.

8.4 Main results

Analysis of the data showed that there were 22 grammatical components in which the students had committed errors. The objective in the presentation of the results has been to determine the percentage of students who made errors in each of the grammatical components and the types of error for each component. A study of the percentage values of different errors gives an insight into their relative frequency and to some extent, the significance of a given error. This should help to select and highlight those areas where error frequency is high and persistent.

However, even though error frequency is a significant indication of areas of learning difficulty for the learners, I believe that simply counting the frequency of errors could lead to ambiguous results as it gives no indication of how the errors are distributed among individual learners. To solve this problem I have focused, on the total number of students making errors. The question arises as to what we mean by 'common error'. In this context, I have considered as significant any category of error of which there is a high occurrence and for which the percentage of learners making that error is

above 20% of the total students (see Chapter Six for more details of the formula used). Consequently, for the purpose of this summary, errors can be divided into two groups: Group A consists of errors that are above the 20% significance margin and Group B consists of errors that fall below this significance margin. The error analysis has been divided into two parts, as was explained in Chapter Eight, the first concerned with grammatical errors and the second with general linguistic errors.

8.4.1 Grammatical errors

Group A: The grammatical components which had error rate above 20% were:

1) *ḥurūf' aljar* (prepositions) 188 students (91.70%)

Types of error:

Unnecessary usage (45.21%), *'aljar* (37.76%) and the exchange of preposition:

'albbā'(31.38), *fi* (18.61%) *'allām* (15.42%),

calā (9.57%), *min* (9.57%), *can* (7.48%) and *'ilā* (4.78%).

2) *fi'cl* (verb): 175 students (85.36%)

Types of error:

muḍāric (present Tense) 65.71%, *maḍī* (past tense) 54.85% and

'amr (order tense) (14.28%).

3) *mafcūl bih* (object): 171 students (83.41%).

Types of error:

naṣb bil 'alif (62.57%) and *naṣb bil yā'*(47.36%).

4) *kāna* and its sisters: 165 students (80.48%).

Types of error:

Rafc (ism kāna) (66.06%) and *naṣb (khabar kāna)* (56.36%).

5) *fācil* (Actor): 149 students (72.68%).

Types of error: *rafʿ* (79.86%) and unnecessary repetitions (20.13%).

6) *nact* (adjective): 140 students (68.29%).

Types of error:

rafʿ (65.71%), *naṣb* (22.14%) and *jarr* (17.85%).

7) *mubtada and khabar* (Topic and comment): 104 students (50.73%).

Types of error:

rafʿ (mubtada) (65.38%) and *rafʿ (khabar)* (47.11%)

8) *inna* and its sisters: 75 students (36.58%)

Types of error:

naṣb (ism inna) (62.66%) and *rafʿ (khabar inna)* (50.66%).

9) *ḍamīr* (pronoun): 71 students (34.63%)

Types of error: *mutaṣil* (dependent pronoun) (71.83%)

and *munfaṣil* (independent pronoun) (52.11%).

10) *cadad* (number) : 63 students (30.73%).

Types of error:

Number agreement (76.19%) and addition of *ʿal* (31.74%).

11) *catf* (conjunction) 49 students (23.90%).

Types of error:

naṣb (42.85%), *rafʿ* (37.25%), *jarr* (24.48%) and *macrifā* and *nakirah* (14.28%).

12) *idāfa* (construct chain): 47 students (22.92%).

Types of error:

mudāf (adjective) (51.06%) and *mudāf ilayh* (genitive) (48.93%).

13) *ism mawṣūl* (relative pronoun): 41 students (20%).

Types of error:

feminine (43.90%), number agreement (29.26%) and masculine (26.82%).

In this study, these thirteen grammatical components were found to be the source of common grammatical errors. These findings were similar to, though not identical with, the results obtained by Al-Sayed (1972), Al-Husaini (1980), Mousa (1985) and Qinawi (1990). There are other studies, however, which have produced results which contradict those of this study and of most other studies of grammatical error. Likdeem (1988), for example, has shown in his study that *badal* scored highly as a source of error whereas our study and those of Al-Husaini (1980) and Abu Shu'aishi (1981) have shown that *badal* had a very low score. Likdeem's study was conducted in Pajaya, in Algeria, and the contrast between the results suggests that dialect background may have some affect on the kinds of grammatical error committed by the students.

Group B: The grammatical components which had an error rate below 20%;

1) *alḥāl* (circumstantial accusative): 24 students (11.70%).

Types of error:

naṣb (79.16%) and gender (62.50%).

2) *'ism 'ishārah* (the pointer words): 21 students (10.24%).

Types of error:

Gender (57.14%) and number agreement (42.85%).

3) *tamyīz* (specificative): 21 students (10.24%).

Types of error:

naṣb (71.42%) and number agreement (33.33%).

4) *ḍharf* (adverb): 18 students (9.78%).

Types of error:

- dharf zamān* (adverb of time) (66.66%) and *dharf makān* (adverb of place) (44.44%).
- 5) *mafcūl muṭlaq* (cognate object): 11 students (5.36%)
- Types of error:
actual (63.63%) and substitution (36.36%).
- 6) *asmā' alkhamṣa* (the five nouns) : 5 students (2.43%).
- Types of error:
rafʿ (40%), *naṣb* (40%) and *jarr* (20%).
- 7) *badal* (opposition): 5 students (2.43%).
- Types of error:
rafʿ (40%), *naṣb* (40%) and *jarr* (20%).
- 8) *mafcūl li ʾajlih* (causative object): 2 students (0.97%).
- Types of error: *naṣb* (100%).
- 9) *sharṭ* (conditional style): 1 student (0.48%).
- Types of error : addition of *fa* (100%).
- (see Chapter Seven for more details and explanation)

Students committed errors when using all nine of these components. However, the percentage of errors never reached as high as 20% of the sample and these errors are not, therefore, considered common. Most of these nine components were also identified by Alwan (1984), Qinawi (1990) and Al-Husaini (1980). Their studies were aimed at different educational stages - Al-Husaini at intermediate schools, Alwan and the present study at high schools and Qinawi at university level - but the consistency of the results between these studies suggests that students' level of competence in grammar remains much the same as they pass through the educational system.

There are certain grammatical components where the frequency of errors is alarmingly high such as *mafcūl bih* (631). On the other hand, the whole sample of this study made errors only twice in the component of *mafcūl li 'ajlih*. This cannot necessarily be attributed to the difficulty or the simplicity of the said components. It may be the result of the excessive or inadequate usage of the components (see table 7.3). This conclusion supports that of Al-Sayed (1987) who attributed the frequency of error making in some components to the fact that students had not used them very much.

The basic grammatical components found in this study were fifteen in number: *fi'cl, fācil, mubtadā* and *khābar, inna* and its sisters, *mafcūl bih, 'alḥāl, dḥarf, tamiyiz, ḥurūf'aljar, 'idāfa, caṭf, nā'ib fācil, kāna* and its sisters, *nact* and *'asmā 'alkhamsah* (see Table No. 7.8 for full explanation in Chapter Seven). The term “basic grammatical components” was introduced by Mahmood Al-Sayed (1972). He contacted a number of specialists in teaching Arabic grammar, specialists in teaching the other branches of the Arabic language: literature, rhetoric, criticism and philosophy, and grammar teaching supervisors and asked one question: What are the basic grammatical components that should be taught to students? He listed 20 grammatical components upon which all these specialists agreed (see Table 7.7). Of the 20 grammatical components listed by Al-Sayed, only 15 or 75% were used by the students in this sample. This suggests a weakness in their use of the basic components of the grammar of the language which are indispensable to correct linguistic usage. This weakness persists despite the fact that all students in the sample have studied these components during each of the three main educational stages, primary, intermediate and secondary, and that, at each

stage, their knowledge of each component was revised and expanded as they advanced through the system. This view is supported by Masri (1981). He sent a questionnaire to students, teachers and educational supervisors to find out how much grammar students had learnt after eight years of schooling. He found, contrary to his expectation, that studying grammar over this period had not improved their grammatical ability.

8.4.2. General linguistic errors

I have briefly discussed the results of the first part of this study i.e. the grammatical components in which students have committed errors along with the frequency of such errors. Now I highlight briefly general linguistic errors. Before doing so, it is worth mentioning that the types of general linguistic error do not fit into the categories of the grammatical components taught in the Saudi syllabus designed for the elementary, intermediate and high school stages. However, they are still considered grammatical errors if they are found in the students' answers in grammar exams and quizzes in the Saudi curriculum system (Ministry of Education 1988:130). Since they do not fit into the grammatical categories designed for this study, I have created another category and a different statistical procedure (see Chapter Seven). Although many studies have been carried out on grammatical errors in Arab countries, only two have included general linguistic errors: that of Qinawi (1990) and the present study.

The following is a summary of the results of the analysis of general linguistic errors:

Group A: Who had an error rate above 20% (common errors):

1. Insertion of unnecessary words (164 students - 80%)
2. Slang words (133 students - 64.87%)
3. Incomplete sentence. (96 students - 46.82%).
4. Slang expression (71 students - 21.95%)

Group B: Who had an error rate below 20%

1. Wrong translation : (38 students - 18.30%)
2. Words usage : (36 students - 17.56%)
3. Double negation : (11 students - 5.36%)

(See the results reproduced in full in Chapter Seven).

There is a slight difference between the definition of general linguistic error in this study and in Qinawi's. There is, however, agreement between the results of the two studies. Both show that unnecessary usage and incomplete sentences occur frequently in students' writing. In addition, both studies show a low percentage score in wrong translation. Surprisingly, Qinawi's study did not include slang expressions or slang words in the category of general linguistic error. Given that Arab students rarely write without using slang, I very much doubt that the samples of writing used by Qinawi did not contain some examples of this.

8.4.3 Other results

The number of grammatical components which were used in students' written work was thirty three and they were used a total of 71254 times (see table 7.1). It is important to know the grammatical components used by students not only for calculating the frequency of repetition of errors made by them, but also because it has

great significance for syllabus designers. This is because such results give an accurate idea, based on figures, of the nature of the grammatical components which were used in the student's work and the rate at which they were repeated. The method of calculating the frequency of use of grammatical components follows that of Al-Sayed (1972). Other studies on grammatical components, Hamdan (1976), Al-Shekhesheer (1978), Al-Naqah (1981), Mousa (1985), Qinawi (1990), and others, did not use this method for tabulating errors.

The number of mistakes made by students in all 22 grammatical components was 3214. There were differences between the rates at which those errors were repeated. For example, in *hurūf aljar* (prepositions), mistakes were repeated 667 times and in *sharṭ* (condition) twice only (see table 7.4 for the full results). This study was concerned with the frequency of errors for two reasons. First, it helps to investigate the errors frequency of types of grammatical components and, second, it represents an important information source for syllabus designers, since it gives a clear idea about the rate of the types of errors for every grammatical component. This is similar to the diagnosis of a disease before specialists can prescribe suitable medication. This study is the only study of grammatical errors which has analysed both the percentage of students who committed errors and the percentage of errors themselves. Abu Shu'ayshi (1981), for example, calculated only the percentage of students who committed errors. The advantages of using both methods are explained in Chapter Seven.

From comparing the frequency of errors made in the grammatical components (see Table 7.6), we can conclude that (a) a low percentage of errors does not

necessarily mean that the grammatical components have been used correctly. It may be the result of the scarcity of use of such components, such as *mafcūl li 'ajlih* and *shart*. This result matches that of Al-Sayed (1987). And (b) for the majority of grammatical components in which students have made errors, the more they were used, the more errors students made, as was the case with *hurūf al jar* and *'idāfa*.

8.5 Relevant conclusions

On the basis of the results of this study we present the following conclusions:

1. Third year male students at Saudi high schools make many grammatical errors. Table 7.2 shows that 95.12% of the total number of students made grammatical errors, and only 4.87% wrote their composition with no grammatical errors.
2. Comparing the grammatical components where students of the sample have made errors and the grammatical components which are taught in the three main stages of education, one finds that the majority of components where students make errors have been taught with a difference in the amount of information only. This, without doubt, raises questions about the process of teaching Arabic not only at high schools but also at all other levels. The deteriorating level of students' accuracy which was highlighted by many educators and scholars, Abdulrahman (1969), Ibrahim (1969) and Ibn Khaldon (1958) and the frequency of grammatical errors in their writings do not match the great efforts that have been put into teaching grammar in all three stages. This result is not surprising as it is consistent with the findings of Elayan (1978) who found that the aims of grammar teaching in Jordanian schools were not attained. The result also supports the seventh-century theory of Ibn Khaldon (1958). He believed that

the study of rules and inflection alone does not help students to understand language because rules are just the code of language.

3. Local colloquial accents had much influence on making errors in sixteen grammatical components which were *ḥurūf aljar*, *fiʿl* (*muḍāric*, *maḍī* and *ʾamr*), *mafcūl bih*, *mubtadā* and *khavar*, *ʾinna* and its sisters, *ḍamīr*, *ʾidāfa*, *ʾism mawṣūl*, *alḥāl*, *ʾism ʾishārah*, *tamyīz* *ḍharf*, *mafcūl muṭlaq*, *ʾasmāʾalkhamsah* and *mafcūl liʾajlih*. This is the case with grammatical errors. General linguistic errors were of two main types and also demonstrate the influence of colloquial Arabic on the way students write and the way they think. The first type is slang words which were used by 133 students or 87% of the total number of students; and the second type is slang expressions which were used by 71 students or 21.95%. This influence on students to a great extent, is similar to the influence of the mother tongue of those learning English as a foreign or second language.

The first researcher who pointed out this fact was Qinawi (1990) who used the term mother tongue to refer to the colloquial Arabic and the term target language to refer to the standard language. Although I agree with Qinawi on the influence of slang language on the standard language, which is known in linguistics as language transfer, I do not agree that it is similar to the influence of the mother tongue on learning English as a second language. There are big differences between the two cases because colloquial Arabic is a modified variety of standard Arabic. Words are often the same, but colloquial Arabic does not always stick to the grammatical rules of standard Arabic. When learning a second language, as in the case of an Arab learning English,

for instance, one is learning a totally different language in words, constructions, grammar, etc.

4. This study showed that students used some grammatical components less than others. For instance, *'uslūb 'attacajub* and *laysamā* were used three times only, *kam 'alkhabaryah* and *(á) abwaṣliyyah* two times and *(áy) altafsīriyyah* once (see Table 7.1). These statistics give a clear indication of the weak structure of the language used by students. These results show also that students did not benefit from being taught such components, although the aim of teaching grammar is to enrich students' linguistic wealth through the use of different linguistic styles. Similar results were obtained by Masri (1981) who investigated the success of grammar teaching in the various stages of public education. She found that the targets of grammar teaching were not reached.

5. The results of the study have proved that students make many mistakes when using articles, such as *ḥūruf 'aljar*, which was the most frequently occurring mistake. The same is true of *caṭf* and *sharṭ*, where students made errors by substitution and deletion, which sometimes makes their writings obscure and ambiguous and thus needing interpretation and clarification.

6. An important result of the study can be derived from a comparison of the Table of Frequency of Use of Grammatical Components and the Table of the Frequency of the Repetition of Errors (Tables 7.1 and 7.4). The relationship of the ranking of a specific component in these two tables can take three forms, (a) a component can rank high in frequency of use but low in repetition of errors. There are 7 such components:

mubtadā and *khābar*, *fācil*, *caṭf*, *ʾidāfa*, *ʾism ʾisharah*, *badal*, *ʾism mawṣūl*. (b) a component can rank high in the frequency of errors but low in frequency of use. There are 13 such components: *hurūf ʾaljar*, *mafcūl bih*, *kāna* and its sisters, *nact*, *inna* and its sisters, *ḍamīr*, *cadad*, *ḥāl*, *tamyīz*, *mafcūl muṭlaq*, *ʾasmā ʾalkhamsah* and *shart*. And (c) a component can rank more or less the same in each ranking. There are 2 such components: *mafcūl li ʾajlih* and *fiḥl*.

It can be concluded from the above that if a component scores highly in usage and has a low ranking in repetition of errors this is a positive sign. For example, *caṭf* came fifth in sequence of use and eleventh in that of repetition of errors. If, on the other hand, a component of errors scores highly in repetition of errors and shows little usage, this is a less positive sign, as in the case of *inna* and its sisters which came fourteenth in usage and eighth in repetition of errors (see Table 7.19).

Although Al-Sayed (1972) was the first to investigate the usage of grammatical components, the present study is the first to compare this usage with error frequency, a comparison which has produced the important results described above.

7. From the analysis of the results of this study (see Chapter Seven), it has been shown that one of the important reasons for students making errors is the difficulty and complexity of some of the grammatical rules which they are taught. Such difficulty and complexity have led to a misunderstanding of the rules, and, consequently, to the making of errors. Take for example, *kāna* and its sisters, which is one of the grammatical components which is generally considered to be easy, since *kāna* needs *ʾism marfūc* and *khābar manṣūb*. However, the rule says that it is possible to replace *ʾism*

kāna by an implied pronoun. Such replacement of *'ism kāna* is not easy for the student to understand, hence he gets confused and, consequently, makes errors.

The idea that the difficulty of Arabic grammar may be a cause of grammatical mistakes is supported by the work of Al-Kholi (1961), Al-Alanbari (1955) and Mustafa (1959). They all point out that the grammar syllabus has a large number of components and theories which are complicated and difficult for students to understand.

8. The similarity between grammatical rules and the names of grammatical components has been one of the factors which has led students to make errors. For example, there are two components which are similar in name but different in rule; they are *kāna* and its sisters and *'inna* and its sisters. Some students confuse them, and, sometimes, do not differentiate between them in their influence on *'ism* and *khobar*; consequently, errors are made (see Chapter Seven for full details of the data analysis of *nact*, *'alhāl* and *kāna* and its sisters).

9. The wide separation between the influencing element and the influenced one in grammatical components confuses students when they apply the rules, and hence they make errors. For example *fi'cl* has an effect on *maf'ūl bih* by the case of *naṣb*; if there is wide separation between these two components, students will not be certain as to what has affected *maf'ūl bih* and thus give the wrong *'icrāb*.

10. Through analysing students' writings, I have noticed that when sentences are related to each other by *ḍamīr*, *'ism 'ishāra* or *'ism mauṣūl*, students sometimes make errors using the wrong form. Thus, when they talk about a feminine in a previous

sentence, they use a masculine; they use the singular to refer to the plural, etc. (See the data analysis of *'ism'ishāra* and *ḍamīr* as examples, Chapter Seven).

11. The study has shown that although the students used in this study were in the final year at high school, their style was poor and many of their sentences were simple, consisting of *mubtadā* and *khabar* or *fi'cl* and *fācil*, and they had no sense of creativity. Moreover, many students wrote incomplete sentences or used double negation, which made the reader confused about what they meant.

12. Transference from colloquial to formal Arabic, which has already been mentioned earlier, has positive and negative aspects. The students operate on similarities between *cāmmī* structure and *fūṣḥā*. This is based on sound grammatical rules and the similarities between these two (so called) languages can facilitate learning. The more common side of transference however, is negative interference which I highlighted earlier in this Chapter. Interference is an inevitable part of Arabic grammar learning. It is therefore more sensible to accept this fact and make the best of it. Since interference is inevitable, we should try to find out how to make positive use of it in the classroom.

13. One of the important conclusions we can derive from the results of this study is that the students assume that because two grammatical components share some degree of similarity, they must be treated identically in all circumstances. This is the process of analogy. Similarity is a mixed blessing for language acquisition. It has a facilitating effect in some cases, making the processing of language material easy, and in others it has retarding effects, making it difficult for the learner to make the required distinctions.

Examples of false analogy can be found in the errors in these grammatical components: *ḥurūf 'aljar*, *'asmā 'alkhamsa*, *khābar mubtadā* and *alḥāl* (see *mubtada* and *khābar* Table 7.18).

14. Through the process of analysing their writing, I have noticed that students, sometimes, fail to observe the restrictions that apply to certain structures and they therefore apply rules in inappropriate contexts. This again is connected with over-generalisation, as the students apply a rule that they already know to another context and thus violate the limitation of a certain item to certain structures. The error in *ism mawṣūl* when used as *muthannā* (dual) some students used it in the case of *raf'c* when it was supposed to be in the case of *naṣb* (See Table 7.25).

15. In addition to the direct reasons for students making grammatical errors mentioned above, I believe that there are other reasons which vary in importance. For instance, methods of teaching Arabic grammar in the Saudi schools are still conventional, and depend on memorising the rules together with examples. Such methods do not help much in understanding the rules and allowing students themselves to apply them. Another reason is that Ibn Khaldon (1958), who lived in the seventh century, was one of the pioneer scholars who criticised the method of teaching grammar and believed it was one of the causes of error among students. He compared the student who learns the rules of grammar but does not apply them to a person who knows the rules of carpentry but never practises his craft. Another reason is that selecting grammatical components to be taught in Arabic grammar syllabuses at schools in Saudi Arabia is based on personal experience and the ideas of members of concerned committees which sometimes ignores students' actual needs. It appears from Al-Sayed's

study (1987) that this problem of selection is not confined to Saudi Arabia but plagues most other Arab countries, in particular Egypt and Syria.

Some teachers of Arabic, in general, and those of grammar, in particular, are not specialists in teaching Arabic, and some of them are even graduates of Islamic studies. Moreover, some of them have not taken any training courses in teaching this vital subject. This leads to teachers to hate grammar and this in turn influences their students.

There are other teachers who use colloquial Arabic to explain Arabic grammar lessons. I have noticed this myself during visits to high schools to carry out field research. This, without doubt, contradicts goals set by the Ministry of Education for the teaching of Arabic grammar (see Chapter Two) and may lead students to make errors when using the language. The use of colloquialism has also been noted by Al-Husaini (1980), Mousa (1985) and Masri (1981).

The branches of Arabic other than grammar, such as literature, composition and rhetoric, are taught as if they were totally separate from grammar. Therefore, when the teacher marks exam papers of composition, for instance, he does not pay attention to grammatical errors nor does he draw the students' attention to them. This fact is supported by the theory of Younis, Fathi and Al-Naqah (1977) who criticised teaching Arabic language branches separately. They recommended teaching them in one unit.

Grammar exams in the Saudi educational system do not take into account the importance of applying the grammatical rules in the form of expressions. Their focus is on information only such as the rule and examples of it, but not on grammatical errors,

which are more important. This negligence will leave the problem of making errors unsolved.

The mass media bear much responsibility for students' weakness in grammar and the frequency of their errors. In addition to the fact that T.V. series and video films take up a good deal of students' time, they also negatively affect their linguistic capability, since the language of such series and films is often very poor. I have pointed out earlier in this chapter (see general linguistic errors) that there were many wrong expressions that have leaked from the media to the students from the media like using *afḥāl 'almusācida* (*qāma* and *tamma*) unnecessarily, let alone the TV series which use a lot of slang words and ungrammatical sentences. This view is in a harmony with the results of Qinawi (1990) who put part of the blame on the media for grammatical errors he found in his sample's writing. The Masri study (1981) also revealed the students' language was affected by media. Similarly, the mixing of cultures, the easy reach of access to the world's countries made possible by the high technology communication systems, the Arabicizing of many fields of knowledge and the great number of non-Arabs coming to Saudi Arabia all have negative effects on students' Arabic, since many foreign expressions become common, as has been shown by this study.

8.6 Implications for practice

The following educational implications seem justified as a result of this investigation:

1. *Cāmmī* the colloquial language, plays a part in the learning of Arabic grammar and consequently causes students to commit errors, as this study seems to suggest

between *cāmmī* and the target, Arabic grammar. If the students are made to understand the function of *cāmmīyah* dialect and the principles on which it works, they will know the differences between *cāmmī* dialect and the *fuṣḥa* and hence will be in a better position to distinguish between the target *fuṣḥa* they are learning and *cāmmī*. They will, as a result, learn grammar more effectively. For example, there are many similarities between the structure of *cāmmī* dialect and *fuṣḥa* grammatical rules in the grammatical component of *'inna* and its sisters. *cāmmī* as well as *fuṣḥa* given *naṣb* case to *'ism 'inna* when it is either *muthannā* or *jamc*, but at a deeper level, there are differences between the two languages. In the same example of *'inna* and its sisters, the correct *fuṣḥa* gives *rafʿ* to *khavar 'inna* whereas *cāmmī* gives *naṣb*. When we get the learner to realise these differences, he will decrease the incidence of negative transfer. Obviously, teachers of Arabic grammar should be from the same region as their students if this suggestion is to be implemented successfully, because dialects differ in Saudi regions, north, south, east, west and central. So, for public schools in Riyadh, teachers should be from the central region, for example.

2. The results of this study are of great significance to these groups of people who are the first to benefit from them. The first group is that of the curriculum planners and syllabus designers at the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia who are responsible for education at all school stages, namely primary, preparatory and secondary. This study shows how well the various aspects of the educational process pertaining to Arabic teaching, such as curricula, syllabuses, teachers and exams, are working. In particular, the study has revealed the students' weak points which are the symptoms of an illness. The Ministry of Education bears the prime responsibility for investigating the causes of

this illness and for finding a suitable cure. Equally, the Ministry is responsible for maintaining and developing the positive features revealed by this study.

The second group which may benefit from the results of this study is that of curricula directorates at universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results show them the real level of students in Arabic grammar after graduating from high schools. This enables those concerned to know the weak points of students, which should be taken into consideration when designing and planning curricula and syllabuses for the teaching of grammar at various colleges.

The results of the study may also concern the teachers of Arabic language. Not only has this study presented important results for teachers, but it also developed a methodology for analysing errors in written work. However, there is no reason why the methods used here should not be extended to other aspects of language including speaking, reading and listening. If teachers were to apply these methods, they would have a powerful tool for discovering their students' general linguistic strengths and weaknesses.

3. It was mentioned earlier in this Chapter, that many students use simple sentences consisting of *mubtadā* and *khobar*, for instance, or *fi'cl* and *fācil*, and avoid using other grammatical components, which makes their writings weak. This is undoubtedly alarming, since such students are about to enter a new life which necessitates mastering expressions in a style that is effective and employing the grammatical components the student has studied in activities such as official

correspondence, writing speeches for public gatherings, writing reports in a convincing way, etc.

4. It has been mentioned in this chapter that exams share some responsibility for students making errors. Therefore, I believe, that it is necessary to reconsider the marks allocated to the subject of grammar in exams. For instance, instead of concentrating on information about grammatical rules given by students in awarding marks, there should be emphasis on using the rules themselves to achieve the highest marks. Fewer marks should then be allocated for information about those rules. Besides, students studying other branches of Arabic such as literature, rhetoric and composition should be penalized for the grammatical errors they make. In addition, a good amount of marks should be allocated to grammar if assessment is for all branches of Arabic together.

5. In order to ensure that the grammatical errors made by students are always picked up by teachers and not only in grammar classes, I suggest that the splitting of Arabic teaching between grammar teachers, literature and rhetoric teachers, and so on, is stopped. Instead, classes should be divided into smaller groups and each group should be taught all topics by the same teacher.

6. An arresting method of attracting students' attention to grammatical mistakes in their writings is to accustom them to correcting their errors by themselves. For example, they could exchange the exercise papers to look for their errors, and the teacher can choose a sample of those papers and mark them together with students who learn the causes for such errors.

7. Reviewing the grammatical components to be taught to students and weeding out those grammatical rules which are not used by students or do not enrich their style in writing and speaking will reduce the size of the syllabus which causes the teacher to focus on fulfilling one aim only, which is to finish all the topics covered by the course. This lack of time does not allow the teacher to demonstrate many applications of the rules which should be one of the fruits of studying grammar.

8. For particular students who repeatedly make the same grammatical errors, we would suggest the development of batteries of worksheets by which they could drill themselves in the correction of particular errors. This technique has an advantage in that it does not waste the time of those students who do not need special attention for a particular grammatical error.

9. Since one of the primary objectives of the Arabic grammar learning programme is to encourage and enable students to express themselves in *fushā*, a change of attitude towards errors and error treatment is needed. Students' errors and deviations should be tolerated and should no longer be considered indicative of faulty learning habits. In fact, students' errors can be of great benefit to us, in that they may reveal some of the strategies employed by learners in their attempt to master Arabic grammar components.

10. The results of this study call into question the validity of some principles underlying Arabic language instruction in Saudi Arabian public schools, especially the one that reads:

The golden rule “prevention rather than cure” applies here. In language learning it is much easier to prevent errors from occurring than to correct them after they have been made.

(Ministry of Education, 1988: 312)

The above “golden rule” does not seem to work in view of the fact that a perfect or error-free performance should not be expected nor demanded from learners. The task should be concentrated on minimising grammatical errors only.

11. While conducting the field study, I noticed that three grammar teachers were not qualified teachers. I believe that in order to help learners minimise grammatical errors, the Ministry of Education as well as teachers in preparatory colleges have to ensure a fairly high standard of performance from those who will eventually teach at secondary school level. This is so because graduates from the university (who form the bulk of Arabic language staff of the secondary schools and colleges of education) who have not achieved an excellent command of Arabic grammar can hardly be expected to teach knowledge and skills which they do not possess themselves. These classes do not seem to have improved our learners’ proficiency in grammar to any significant degree and this calls for a review of both the content and teaching of these programmes. We believe that a careful assessment of academic needs should be carried out and considered in the planning and teaching of these programmes. The kind of grammar a teacher uses will inevitably affect his students’ understanding of the subject matter.

8.7 Implications for further studies

The results of this study are not exhaustive and, therefore, more studies are needed and indeed are potentially unlimited. On the basis of the reported results, the main conclusions and the study limitations, the following avenues for further study may be worth considering:

1. This study may be replicated or extended in different directions to include a larger sample of subjects, representing different groups at different levels, particularly the primary and intermediate stages.

2. As we have seen through the course of the study, it is believed that an inadequate teaching/learning situation was one of the causes of students' weakness in grammar. The impact of the grammar teaching method on students' performance is a significant factor worthy of investigation in future research.

3. The motivation and attitudes of Saudi Arabian students towards Arabic grammar need to be studied and recognised as an essential part of the learning process.

4. This study was limited to identifying and analysing the grammatical errors found in their written work but would the identification and analysis of the students' oral language reveal the same grammatical errors as in their written composition?

5. This investigation was limited to the third year of government secondary schools for boys only. Therefore, it is worth investigating girls at the third year level to make a comparison with the results of this study.

6. It is necessary to identify and analyse the writing of student teachers in the last year of the preparatory college and Arabic language faculties in Saudi Arabia, because they are the future teachers of Arabic grammar in Saudi public schools. The results of

such an investigation would be vital for finding out whether or not they are mastering the Arabic grammar which they are supposed to teach in the near future.

7. I believe that one of the important factors influencing the students' motivation towards learning grammar is the teachers' own behaviour which reflects their personal attitudes towards grammar. This area needs to be investigated.

8. Through identifying and analysing the writing of the students in this investigation, I have noticed that many students commit dictation and spelling errors. These types of errors were outside the scope of this study, but a study should be conducted to investigate them.

9. The results of this study should be considered as the foundation for another study aimed at designing a remedial programme for the grammatical errors found in the writings of the students.

10. This study was limited to public high schools under the administration of the Ministry of Education. Therefore, it is worth conducting a grammatical errors analysis of the writings of students in other types of high school which, sometimes, have different curriculum and syllabus, such as religious high schools, institutions under the administration of Imam Mohammad Bin Saud University, high schools, under the administration of the National Guard most of whose students are from Bedouin background and private high schools which exercise more freedom in designing and implementing the curriculum for their students. When I visited high schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia I have noticed that many grammar teachers were not specialists in Arabic

language i.e. they did not graduate from Arabic language faculties at the Saudi University. Most of the non-specialist teachers of grammar have completed the B.A. degree in Islamic Studies. This, no doubt, has an effect on the students' performance in grammar. Therefore it will be vital to investigate the performance of the students under two types of teachers: Arabic language specialists and non-specialists.

Finally, I do hope that this study will make an impression on the decision-makers and those involved in teaching grammar in Saudi Arabia. I also hope that they will be sufficiently concerned to ensure that steps are promptly taken to put the process of teaching and learning grammar on the right track. I hope that the evidence of the results will stimulate fresh thinking about the issues raised. This, I would hope, might lead to a vigorous promotion of teaching Arabic language generally and grammar in particular, both of which have such an important part to play in the preparation of Saudi youngsters for adulthood so they can contribute successfully towards the prosperity of the country.

Appendix 1

Correspondence

Appendix 1 A

A letter from the Ministry of Education to the
Director-General of Education of Riyadh
District (in Arabic and its translation)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الرقم: ٧/٤/٥٠٦٣
التاريخ: ٢٠١٧/٩/٢٢
التفويصات:

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة المعارف
التطوير التربوي
الإدارة العامة للبحوث والتقويم

الموضوع: بشأن الموافقة على إجراء دراسة

المحترم

سعادة / مدير عام التعليم بمنطقة الرياض

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، وبعد ،

تقدم لنا : الباحث / حمد بن عبد الله بن ناصر الماجد من جامعة
الامام محمد بن سعود الاسلامية .

بطلب : اجراء بحث بعنوان " تحليل الأخطاء النحوية في كتابات طلاب
المرحلة النهائية في الثانويات العامة " وذلك وفق
استمارة البحث والاستبانة والاختبار المرفق صورة لكل ما ذكر .

نأمل السماح له باجراء البحث مع ملاحظة أن الباحث (أو الباحثين) يتحمل
كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث ، ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة
للبحوث التربوية بالوزارة موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق
والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها .

كما نأمل إحالة كامل الأوراق الى مشرف البحوث بإدارتكم لإكمال اللازم .

محمد بن عبد الله
٢٠١٧

وتقبلوا تحياتي .

مدير عام البحوث التربوية والتقويم

د . عبد الخالق صالح خلف

صورة لسعادة وكيل الوزارة المساعد للتطوير التربوي
صورة للإدارة مع الأساس (ص ١) ملف (ب ٤) مع الأساس .

صورة للباحث

يسري B٢

**Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
Educational Development
General Directorate of researches**

No. 17/4/563
15/12/1993

Ref: Permission to carry out a study

His Excellency / Director-General of Education in Riyadh Zone

The researcher Mr. Hamad A. N. Al-Majed from the University of Imam Mohammed Ben Saud has requested a permission to carry out a research entitled " Analysis of grammatical errors found in writing of third grade high school students" according to the enclosed research form, and test form.

You are kindly requested to grant him a permission to carry out the aforesaid research, taking into consideration that the researcher(s) bearing all sorts of responsibility related the research. The would-be permission granted by the General Administration for Educational Researches does not necessarily reflect its approval to the research problem, or the methods and means adopted in studying and examining such problem.

We hope that you kindly refer all papers to the attention of research supervisor in your Administration to carry out the necessary measurements.

Kind wishes.

Director-General of Educational researches
Dr. Abdul Khaliq Saleh Khalaf

Appendix 1 B

A letter from the Director-General of Education of Riyadh District to the Headteachers of the selected schools (in Arabic and its translation)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

المملكة العربية السعودية

وزارة المعارف

الإدارة العامة للتعليم بالرياض

إشئون التعليميه

مكتب التوجيه

الرقم : ٤٥٧٧

التاريخ : ١٣/٩/٨٨

المشروعات : بيان

الموضوع : تسهيل مهمته بناءً على

المحترم

الثانويه

المكرم مدير مدرسه

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد :-

بناء علي خطاب مدير عام البحوث التربويه والتقويم رقم ٥٦٣ / ٤ / ١٧ في ٦ / ٩ / ١٤١٣
حول قيام الباحث / د. عبدالله ناصر الماجد - من جامعه الامام محمد بن سعود الاسلاميه - اجراء
بحث بعنوان ((تحليل الاخطاء النحويه في كتابات طلاب المرحله النهائيه في الثانويه العامه
((وفق استماره البحث . والاختبار المرفق .

وحيث لامانع لدينا من اجراء الدراسه .

نامل تسهيل مهمته - في المدارس الموضحه في البيان .
ولكم تحياتي .

س
أ
١

المدير العام للتعليم بمنطقة الرياض

د . ناصر بن عبدالعزیز السدود

الفريدي

من . لمكتب التوجيه

ص . للملف

الرقم :

التاريخ :

المشروعات :

الموضوع :

المحترم

المكرم مدير مدرسة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد :-

بيان بأسماء المعارف الثانوية التي سيقوم الباحث / حمد عبدالله الماجد بزيارتها في مدينة الرياض :-

الثانوية

الثانوية

٢- الادريسي

١- أبوبكر العربي

٤- بدر

٣- الأندلس

٦- حي النظيم

٥- الجوهري

٨- الرياض

٧- الرضوان

١٠ ✓- الامام الشوكاني

٩- السليمانية

١٢ ✓- عبدالرحمن الغافقي

١١- العارض

١٤- الفيصل

١٣- الفاروق

١٦ ✓- محمود الغزنوي

١٥- المأوردى

١٨- المعتمد بن عباد

١٧- المدائن

٢٠- موسى بن نصير

١٦- معهد العاصمة

٢٢- اليرموك

١٧ ✓- النجاشي

٢٣- اليمامة

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
General Educational Administration in Riyadh
Educational Affairs
Guidance Office

Ref: Facilitating researcher's work

Dear the headteacher

According to the letter No. 563/4/17 dated 6/9/1413 sent by the director general for Education and Assessment concerning the research being carried out by Mr. Hamad A.N. Al-Majed from the University of Mohammed Ben Saud about (Analysis of grammatical errors found in writings of third grade high school students) based on the enclosed research and the test forms . As we have no objection against carrying out such research. you are kindly requested to facilitate his work in the schools as shown in the enclosed statement .

Yours sincerely

Dr. Nasir Al-Dawood

Educational Director General in Riyadh Zone

A list of secondary schools in which the researcher Mr. Hamad A. Al-Majed is going to visit and conduct his field study:

1- Imam Shawkani High School , Riyadh

2- Abdurrahman Al-Ghafiqi High School, Riyadh

3- Mahmoud Al-Ghaznawi High School, Riyadh

4- Al-Najachi High School, Riyadh

Appendix 1 C

A letter from the researcher to the Director-General
of Education of Riyadh District (in Arabic and its
translation)

١٩٩٥/١١/٢٠

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

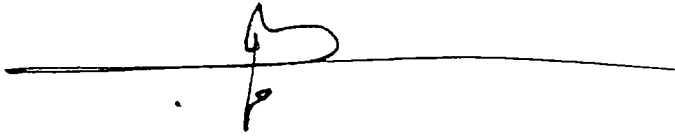
سعادة مدير عام التعليم بمنطقة الرياض د. خالد العواد حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته .. أما بعد:

فأنا أحضر لدرجة الدكتوراه في موضوع (تحليل الأخطاء النحوية في كتابات طلاب السنة الثالثة بالمرحلة الثانوية العامة بمنطقة الرياض) ولكي تكتمل عناصر البحث فإن لدي الرغبة في الإتصال ببعض الإدارات والأقسام للحصول على بعض المعلومات عن أهداف مادة النحو ونصيب هذه المادة في برنامج اللغة العربية . كما أرغب في الحصول على بعض الإحصاءات الحديثة لنتائج إمتحانات الثانوية العامة ..

أرجو التكرم بالسماح لي بالإتصال بالإدارات ذات العلاقة ولكم خالص الشكر ..
والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

أخوكم



حمد بن عبد الله الماجد

H/E Dr. Khalid Awad
Director - General of Education in Riyadh Zone

20/11/1995

Dear Dr. Khalid Awad

I am conducting a Ph.D. thesis entitled “ Analysis of grammatical errors found in writing of third grade high school students” in Riyadh region.

In order to cover the elements of the research, I would like to have your permission to contact the concerned departments to obtain some data and information relevant to my research such as the aims and objectives of Grammar and the allocated share of this subject within Arabic language curriculum. I also would like to get the most updated results of the high school examinations.

I hope that you kindly grant me a permission to contact some concerned departments.

Best Regards

Hamad A. Al-Majed

Appendix 1 D

A letter from the Director-General of
Education of the Riyadh District to the
researcher (in Arabic and its translation)

المشروعات :

التاريخ / /

الرقم :

حفظه الله

المكرم الأخ حمد الماجد

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد

بخصوص طلبكم فيما يتعلق بنسب النجاح في السنوات الأخيرة في مادة النحو بالمرحلة الثانوية . فبالنسبة للوزارة تم تكليف أحد الموظفين بالإتصال بهم لمتابعة هذا الموضوع . ستجدون برفقه إحصائيات نسب النجاح في مركز الرياض والذي يضم المنطقة الوسطى وجزء من الشمالية كما ترفق لكم كتاباً عن تطور التعليم في المملكة وهو يحتوي على معلومات جيدة .

نأمل أن تكون هذه المعلومات فيها ما يفيدكم وإذا أردت أي طلب فنحن جاهزون في الخدمة فلا تتردد بالكتابة أو الإتصال بي والله أسأل أن يوفقك إلى ما تصبو إليه ، وتقبلوا فائق تحياتي .

اخوكم

خالد بن إبراهيم العواد

١١٦/٧/٢٠

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
General Educational Administration
Riyadh Zone
Director General Office**

12/12/1995

Dear Mr. Hamad Al-Majed

May peace be upon you

I hope this letter will reach you in the best of your health and happiness.

As for your application concerning the pass percentage in recent years in Grammar subject in the secondary stage , we asked one of our officers to follow this issue with the ministry. As for Riyadh zone which includes the central region and a section of Northern Region. Included as well, please find a good informative book about the development of Education in the Kingdom .

I hope that the provided information will be of use to your research , and please do not hesitate to write or get in touch with us if you require any further information.

Best regards

Khalid I. Awwad
Director-General

Appendix 2

Instructions given to the teachers before
conducting the writing test (in Arabic
and its translation)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

عزيزي المدرس :

هذا الإمتحان التعبيري هو الأداة الرئيسية للبحث الذي أقوم به للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه حول الأخطاء النحوية. ولكي يحقق هذا الإمتحان الأهداف المرجوة ، فإني أرجو مراعاة التعليمات الآتية:

* أرجو أن تتكرم بتوزيع الأوراق المرفقة والتي تحتوي على موضوع التعبير . أرجو قراءتها مع التعليمات المتعلقة بالطلاب واطلب منهم متابعة قراءتك .

* لا يجوز مساعدة الطلاب في موضوع التعبير ولا يجوز إثارة النقاش حوله. كما لا يجوز للمدرس تصحيح الأوراق قبل أو بعد امتحان الكتابة.

* أرجو إعطاء مهلة خمس دقائق للطلاب لاختيار موضوع التعبير وتنظيم أفكارهم . لكنني أرجو الحزم في التأكيد على الطلاب بضرورة الشروع في الكتابة بعد نهاية الخمس دقائق.

* لا بد من تذكير الطلاب بأن الهدف من هذا الإمتحان هو لتطوير تعليم وتعلم قواعد اللغة العربية، وعليه فإن الإمتحان لن يؤثر مطلقاً على الدرجات.

* من المهم إقناع الطلاب بأن كتاباتهم محاطة بالسرية التامة حتى يتمكنوا من الكتابة بوضوح وصراحة.

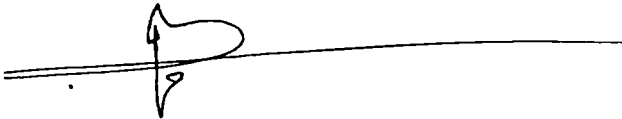
* لا بد من تنبيه الطلاب إلى ضرورة الاعتماد على أفكارهم وتعبيراتهم في الكتابة، وأن يتجنبوا كتابة النصوص المنسوبة إلى الغير قدر المستطاع.

* ما يتعلق ب "الموضوع المحدد" لا بد من التأكيد على الطلاب ضرورة الحديث فقط عن (الإعلام).

أيها الأستاذ الكريم : أقدم لك خالص شكري على تعاونك معنا لإنجاح هذا الإمتحان . متمنياً أن نرى جميعاً أثر هذه البحوث على العملية التعليمية في بلادنا وخصوصاً تعليم قواعد اللغة العربية .

وتقبل فائق تحياتي

حمد الماجد



Dear teacher

This written composition is the main instrument for my Ph. D. thesis on analysing the students' grammatical errors in order for this research to achieve its aims I would like to draw your attention to the following instructions:

(a) Distribute the enclosed assigned topics. Read them together with the instructions for students while the pupils read theirs.

(b) No help is to be given by the teacher. There is no discussion of stimulus to the creative writing. No teacher will correct papers during or after the writing period.

(c) You may allow five minutes for students to select a topic (if needed) and organise their ideas. Strictly, students should start writing at the end of five minute period.

(d) Students should be reminded that the purpose of this test is to improve the teaching and the learning of the Arabic language. Therefore it will not affect their grades.

(e) You should make use of the students' accent to utter confidentiality of their writing, so that they can write clearly and frankly.

(f) Students should be told that they should write using their own ideas and expressions, and should avoid quoting from other texts as much as possible.

(g) For the 'directed' topic test, the students should be urged to write only about the Media and nothing else.

Dear honorable teacher : It is my pleasure to extend my sincere thanks for your co-operation to make this test successful. I wish that this research will have a positive effect on the educational process particularly that of teaching Arabic grammar.

With my best wishes

Hamad A. Al-Majed

Appendix 3

The First Writing Test:
The Free Topic (in Arabic
and its translation)

عزيزي الطالب :

اكتب عن أي موضوع تحس بأهميته وترغب في الكتابة عنه .

قبل أن تبدأ بالكتابة أرجو الإنتباه للتعليمات التالية:

(١) أرجو أن تدون في أعلى الورقة المعلومات الآتية :

اسمك الكامل - اسم المدرس - القسم (أدبي - علمي) - عنوان
التعبير - التاريخ.

(٢) حاول قدر المستطاع أن تكون كتابتك منظمة ودقيقة وشاملة لجوانب
الموضوع.

(٣) اكتب على سطر واترك السطر الآخر.

أخوكم



حمد الماجد

Dear Student:

Write about any topic you think it is important to address

Before you start writing I would like to draw your attention to the following instructions:

- (a) Write your name, your school's name, your division i.e. Science or Arts, the title of the composition and today's date.
- (b) Try your best to have your writing well organised, precise and comprehensive.
- (c) Write alternative lines.

Appendix 4

The Second Writing Test : The
Directed Topic (in Arabic and
its translation)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

عزيزي الطالب: اكتب عن الموضوع الآتي :

(الإعلام وتأثيره على مجتمعنا وما هو -في رأيك- الدور الذي ينبغي أن يساهم به الإعلام في ازدهار الوطن.)

قبل أن تبدأ بالكتابة أرجو الانتباه للتعليمات التالية:

(١) أرجو أن تدون في أعلى الورقة المعلومات الآتية:

اسمك الكامل - اسم المدرس - القسم (أدبي أو علمي) - عنوان التعبير - التاريخ .

(٢) حاول قدر المستطاع أن تكون كتابتك منظمة ودقيقة وشاملة لجوانب الموضوع .

(٣) اكتب على سطر واترك السطر الآخر .

أشرك عزيزي الطالب على تعاونك في تحقيق أهداف هذا البحث والذي يساهم في النهاية في خدمة الطلاب في بلادنا العزيزة.

أخوكم

حمد الماجد

Dear Student:

Write about the following topic:

“The Media and its effect on our Society. What do you think the role of the Media should be in order to contribute to the porosperity of the nation”.

Before you start writing I would like to draw your attention to the following instructions:

- (a) Write your name, your school's name, your division i.e. Science or Arts, the title of the composition and today's date.
- (b) Try your best to have your writing well organised, precise and comprehensive.
- (c) Write alternative lines.

Appendix 5

Glossary of the Arabic Terms

Glossary

<i>ʿAdāt ʿattacrīf</i>	:	The definite article
<i>ʿAfcāl musācidah</i>	:	Accessory verbs (See Chapter Seven, 7.81)
<i>ʿAlhāl</i>	:	Circumstantial accusative (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.14)
<i>ʿAlmunādā</i>	:	A person who is being called
<i>ʿAmr</i>	:	Order tense. (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.2.3)
<i>ʿAn ʿalwasliyah</i>	:	An article used to connect sentences
<i>ʿAnnuswah</i>	:	The feminine
<i>ʿAsmā ʿal khamsa</i>	:	The five nouns(For more details see Chapter Seven,7.7.19)
<i>ʿAttawābic</i>	:	Subordination
<i>ʿAttawkīd</i>	:	Stressing
<i>ʿAy attafsīriyah</i>	:	An article used to explain something
<i>Badal</i>	:	Apposition (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.20)
<i>Bināʿ</i>	:	Declension
<i>Cadad</i>	:	As in English, Arabic number can appear on either written words (five) or figure (5) <i>Cadad</i> refers to the written version of a number (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.10)

<i>Calam makhtūm bi ta att'anith</i>	:	A name of a person or thing in which the last letter is ta the sign of feminine
<i>Cāmil</i>	:	Affector (see <i>nadharyat 'alcāmil</i>).
<i>Cāmmī</i>	:	Colloquial
<i>Catf</i>	:	Conjunction (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.11)
<i>Cilal</i>	:	Justification (See <i>falsafat alcillah</i>)
<i>Cillah</i>	:	Vowel
<i>Damīr mustatir</i>	:	Hidden pronoun (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.9)
<i>Damīr</i>	:	Pronoun (for more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.9)
<i>Dammah</i>	:	The marker of the nominative case
<i>Dharf</i>	:	Adverb. (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.17)
<i>Dharf makān</i>	:	Adverb of place. (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.17)
<i>Dharf zamān</i>	:	Adverb of time. (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.17)
<i>Dilālah</i>	:	Connotative
<i>Fācil</i>	:	Actor or doer. (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.5)
<i>Falsafat 'alcillah</i>	:	The philosophy of justification. Each grammatical rule in Arabic must have justification (for more details see Chapter Four, 4.3.1)
<i>Faṣāḥah</i>	:	Eloquence
<i>Fathah</i>	:	The marker of the accusative case
<i>Ficl</i>	:	Verb (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.2)
<i>Fiqh</i>	:	Islamic jurisprudence
<i>Fuṣḥa</i>	:	Classical Arabic

<i>Ḥadīth</i>	:	The sayings of Prophet Mohammed.
<i>Hawliyāt</i>	:	Annals
<i>Hijrah</i>	:	Emigration The Islamic calendar is dated to 622 A.D. when Prophet Mohammed migrated from his city Makkah to Madinah
<i>Hurūf 'aljar</i>	:	Prepositions (for more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.1)
<i>'Idāfah</i>	:	Constyruct chain (Chapter Seven, 7.7.12)
<i>'Icrāb</i>	:	Case endings, vowel endings or case inflection <i>Icrab</i> is one of the characteristics of Semitic languages (for more details see Chapter Four)
<i>'Illā lilḥaṣr</i>	:	An article indicating exception
<i>'Inna and its sisters</i>	:	Articles used for stressing which have certain effect on the predicate and the subject. (see Chapter Seven, 7.7.8)
<i>'Ishtiḳāq</i>	:	Derivation
<i>'Ism 'inna</i>	:	The predicate of the article <i>'inna</i> (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.8)
<i>'Ism 'ishāra</i>	:	The pointer words (For more detail see Chapter Seven, 7.7.13)
<i>'Ism kāna</i>	:	The predicate of the verb <i>kāna</i> (see Chapter Seven, 7.7.4)
<i>'Ism mawṣūl</i>	:	Relative pronoun. (for details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.13)
<i>'Ism mucaraf bi 'al</i>	:	Adding ('al) to a noun. Like adding the to a noun in English
<i>'Istinbāt</i>	:	Elicitation
<i>'Istintāj</i>	:	Deduction

<i>'Itha 'alfuja'iah</i>	:	An article which indicates sudden action
<i>Jāhiliyah</i>	:	Ignorance. This term refers to the century immediately before Islam
<i>Jamc mu'anath sālīm</i>	:	Sound feminine plural
<i>Jamc muthakar sālīm</i>	:	Sound masculine plural
<i>Jamc taksīr</i>	:	Broken plural
<i>Jāmid</i>	:	Defective
<i>Jarr</i>	:	The accusative
<i>Jazm</i>	:	The jussive case
<i>Jumlah 'ismīyah</i>	:	Noun clause
<i>Jumlah fi'clīyah</i>	:	Verb clause
<i>Kalām 'alcarab</i>	:	The speech of the old Arabs
<i>Kam 'alkhabariah</i>	:	An article used to tell about something
<i>Kāna and its sisters</i>	:	Incomplete verb whose function is different from the normal verbs (for more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.4)
<i>Kasrah</i>	:	The marker of the genitive case
<i>Khabar 'inna</i>	:	The subject of the article inna. (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.8)
<i>Khabar kāna</i>	:	The subject of the verb kāna (see Chapter Seven, 7.7.4)
<i>Khabar mufrad jāmid</i>	:	Detective singular predicate
<i>Khabar mufrad mushtaq</i>	:	Derivative singular predict
<i>Khabar mufrad</i>	:	Singular predicate
<i>.Khalīfah</i>	:	Caliph

<i>Lā siyamā</i>	:	An article which means specially
<i>Lākin'istidrākiah</i>	:	Adversative conjunction. Similar to but in English.
<i>Macmūl</i>	:	Affected (see <i>natharyat alcāmil</i>)
<i>Macrifah</i>	:	Definite article
<i>Macṭūf</i>	:	The word that comes before one of the letters of conjunction (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.11)
<i>Māḍī</i>	:	Past tense (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.2.2)
<i>Mafcūl bih</i>	:	Object (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.3)
<i>Mafcūl li 'ajlih</i>	:	Causative object. (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.21)
<i>Mafcūl macah</i>	:	Accompanying object
<i>Mafcūl mutlaq</i>	:	Cogent object or absolute object (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.18)
<i>Majāz</i>	:	Metaphor
<i>Majzūm</i>	:	Present tense verb in the jussive case
<i>Malakah</i>	:	Language habit or language faculty
<i>Manṣūb</i>	:	A noun in the accusative case
<i>Maṣdar</i>	:	The infinitive
<i>Mubtadā and khabar</i>	:	Topic and comment. (For more details see Chapter Seven 7.7.7)
<i>Muctal al'āakhir</i>	:	The verb ending with any vowel letters.
<i>Muctal</i>	:	Any verb which has one of vowel letters <i>waw</i> , <i>yā</i> or <i>ālif</i> .
<i>Muḍāf ilayh</i>	:	The genitive. The words that comes later in the construct chain. (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.12)

<i>Mudāf</i>	:	The adjunctive. The word that comes first in the construct chain (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.12)
<i>Mudāric</i>	:	Present tense. (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.2.1)
<i>Munṣarif</i>	:	Conjunctive
<i>Mushtaq</i>	:	Derivative
<i>Musnad ʿilayh</i>	:	Subject
<i>Musnad</i>	:	Predicate
<i>Muthannā</i>	:	Dual system
<i>Nact</i>	:	Adjective (For more details see Chapter Seven, 7.7.6)
<i>Nakirah</i>	:	Indefinite article
<i>Naṣb</i>	:	The genitive
<i>Nadharyat ʾalcāmil</i>	:	The affector theory. This theory is one of the essential arguments of (traditional) Arabic grammar. It was believed by early Arab grammarians that each case ending could not exist without an affector. Any sentence has two parts <i>cāmil</i> (affector) and <i>macmūl</i> (affected) (see 4.3.2)
<i>Nūn</i>	:	An Arabic letter i.e. letter similar to the English N
<i>Qiyās</i>	:	Analogy
<i>Rafc</i>	:	The nominative case
<i>Saliqah</i>	:	Linguistic intuition
<i>Samāc</i>	:	Hearing. Whatever is heard from old Arabs during the <i>fasahah</i> period is called <i>samac</i>
<i>Ṣarf</i>	:	Morphology
<i>Ṣawt</i>	:	Phonetic

<i>Shahādah</i>	:	An important statement in Islam (There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Messenger.)
<i>Shart</i>	:	Conditional style. (See Chapter Seven, 7.7.22)
<i>Shuthūth</i>	:	Irregularity
<i>Sukūn</i>	:	The marker of the jussive case
<i>Sūq</i>	:	Market
<i>Sūrah</i>	:	A chapter of the Koran
<i>Ta'wīl</i>	:	Interpretation
<i>Tābicīn</i>	:	The second generation after the death of Prophet Mohammed
<i>Tacliq</i>	:	Suspension
<i>Tamyīz</i>	:	Specificative (see Chapter Seven, 7.7.16)
<i>Tajrīd</i>	:	Abstraction
<i>Tanwīn</i>	:	Nunnation
<i>Taqdir</i>	:	Suppletive insertion or dummy element.
<i>Tarkīb</i>	:	Structure
<i>'Uslūb ʾattacajub</i>	:	Exclamation style
<i>Waw</i>	:	An Arabic letter similar to the English W
<i>Yā'</i>	:	An Arabic letter similar to the English Y

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