

## The Impact of Learner Language Knowledge on Teacher-learner Authentic Partnership

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### ABSTRACT

The language teacher and learner (T-L) partnership is a give-and-take relationship that gains authenticity through mutual awareness that their collaboration can only happen through the learner's autonomy as an active partner and a source of information. To play that role properly, the learner's language performance is expected to have a high level of TL knowledge reflected in norm-based grammar. Put differently, the more established the T-L partnership is, the more accurate the learner's TL is expected to be. To explore the level of TL knowledge that can enable the learner to play the role of a reliable partner, the present study measured the English grammar global accuracy of the foundation students at a Saudi university. The results obtained show that the learner's TL is noticeably inaccurate, implying that T-L partnership is still far from being true in that academic context. As such, the T-L alienation requires appropriate pedagogical interference believed to reconcile between the teacher and learner in a quest to activate the learner's academic role and build their sound linguistic competence.

**Key words:** Teacher-Learner Partnership, Collaboration, Source of Information, Active Partner, Learner Autonomy, Norm-based Grammar, Linguistic Competence

### INTRODUCTION

The T-L partnership is an academic and social bond that makes of language teaching and language learning a shared task designed and produced through communication, and collaboration between the teacher and learner with trust, autonomy, and mutual confidence. By being a partner, the learner's TL performance is expected to be well-studied, mutually chosen, and grammatically accurate. In other words, without being equipped with enough language knowledge, learners cannot look for information, comment on it, and suggest the teaching techniques suitable for them to learn language easily and acquire it fast. The T-L partnership is ultimately based on the learner TL proficiency level that can only be achieved through the global grammar accuracy. The T-L partnership, as a key to successful language learning, is investigated in the academic background being studied through the measurement of the global grammar accuracy in the learner language produced in an oral presentation test. The level of grammar accuracy is the measurable construct that can reflect the learner's ability of playing the role of a teacher's partner. In return, the level of learner TL grammar accuracy will also reveal about the teacher awareness of such a vital academic principal, partnership. Based on the results obtained, the present study first examines how inaccurate TL grammar reflects a certain academic reality. Then, it will suggest the appropriate

measures that can reinforce the adoption of such a principal in the appropriate way.

### FROM GRAMMAR ACCURACY TO COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Based on Ellis's (2003) and Wolfe-Quintero et al.'s (1998) Operationalisation of Accuracy, the objective measures of grammar adopted in the current experimental research are 1) error density, 2) types of errors, 3) mean number of errors per 100 words (Kuiken & Vedder, 2007), and 4) mean number of errors per AS-Unit (Lambert & Engler, 2007). That is, the term grammar investigated in the present study is both morphological and lexical, examining the internal structure of words as well as their syntactic relationships. The research objective behind that is to investigate how the learners' interlanguage abides by the TL norms in the production of single words as well as in syntactic units. In fact, grammar global accuracy is vital as it addresses the code that assigns functions to language messages whether or spoken or written. In this respect, Hymes (1966, p. 53), asserted that the "communicative form and function are in integral relation to each other". That is, each form has a function therefore implements a certain meaning to the message conveyed. So, the ability to create grammatical utterances is the ability to communicate, (Canale and Swain 1980). In a word, communicative competence can only be achieved

through grammatical competence. The communicative ability means their possession of the rules that permit the speaker to make judgments about whether or not utterances are grammatical. In the same vein, Savignon (1985, p.130) even equates language proficiency with knowledge of grammar rules. Also, for Bachman (1990) and Brown (1994), basic to the communicative competence is the grammatical competence which is being measured in learner language to investigate the ability of that learner to act as partner in language learning process with full academic agenda and well-established vision.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The T-L partnership sets the foundation of the type of relationship between the teacher and student. Based on trust, autonomy, and cooperation, it is assumed that the learner would have enough linguistic competence that permits them to understand and produce language accurately.

In a bottom-up investigation, the present study aims at measuring the amount of grammar global accuracy in the learner's language to examine the type of relationship between the teacher and learner, and how that is translated in the learner's TL grammar accuracy. The investigation links between the types of grammar errors on the one hand and the type of T-L relationship on the other hand. The research questions are the following: What are the learner's grammar errors, why have they persisted, and what do they reveal about the T-L partnership in the academic context under study?

## METHOD

Global grammar accuracy has been gauged via six objective measures: error density, error free AS-Units, frequency of error per AS-Unit, mean number of errors per 100 words, most common error procedures, most common error types.

### Participants

For data reliability and case authenticity, a group of 50 male foundation students at King Abdul Aziz University were randomly chosen. All the learners had almost seven years of exposure to English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia.

### Materials

The materials used in this study are videotaped oral presentation consisting of two modes of speech: a monologue prepared by the students in advance. The oral production was segmented into AS-Units. And errors recorded were categorized into types and procedures (Corder, 1973).

## RESULTS

The results will account for the errors recorded in terms of density, categories, types, and frequency. In this respect, it is important to point out that the language is grammatically inaccurate. More specifically, the level of grammatical ac-

curacy is uneven between the two modes of speech. More accurate grammar in the pre-planned monologue and with more substitution error categories whereas in the dialogue, the online-planned dialogue is less accurate and with the more dominance of omission errors category. Last but not least, the sole majority of errors are interlingual.

### Error Density

As shown in Table 1, there is a mean average of 169.20 words produced in the monologue, and that number is high enough to express any idea or describe any scene, event, or a point of view. It reflects a considerable language knowledge, command and proficiency on the part of the speaker whose language repertoire seems to be rich enough to allow for self-expression and for the choice of a variety of topics. Similarly, the density of language production is reinforced by the big number of AS-Units produced in the monologue - 17.42 AS-Units with 9.5 words per unit. In terms of language quality, the mean number of sentences is 10.68. That number is surprising as the mean number of words can hold more sentences.

The AS-Unit is syntactically-based and flexible enough to include even single words (Ellis 2003). Despite that, there are as many as 9.5 words per AS-Unit higher than the ideal number which is 7 to 9 words per English sentences in spoken language which is considered less complex than the written one. However, the speakers' language command is better identified after detecting the density and types of grammar errors made in that big number of words produced. Accuracy wise, the mean number of grammar errors is 11.89 errors per 100 words. That sizable amount of errors drives the oral output produced not to be very accurate grammatically (C) given the 10-day period of time provided to the students to prepare their oral presentation topics.

Clearly, the considerably dense language produced in the monologue is highly inaccurate as described by Ellis (2003) who defined accuracy as "the extent to which the language produced in performing a task conforms to native speaker norms" (p. 339). That is, the learners' type of interlanguage in this academic context seems to be an accumulation of unrefined TL knowledge over the years. That high level of error density reflects the fact that the learner has not formally acquired much of the TL structural norms due to the lack of enough exposure and practice required when he is the centre of the TL teaching efforts. English is necessary only in science majors in higher education but not highly urgent for future jobs or for daily communication. Back in time, teachers of English in the intermediate and secondary schools extensively use the learners' mother tongue as the sole means of communication and language of instruction (Fareh 2010). So, the absolute majority of students learn English instrumentally; to get the pass grade. As a result, the students' type of English is made up of scrambled parts of speech clinging in the mind over the years more than a build-up of language structures developed and refined over the course of time.

**Table 1 .** Number of errors made by the 50 Subjects both in the Monologue and Dialogue

	ELCS	ELCA	Total
Monologue			
Mean number of words	254.13	94.43	169.20
Mean number of errors in grammar	28.3	11.95	20.12
Mean Number of errors in grammar per 100 words	11.13	12.65	11.89
Mean Number of Words per AS-Unit	11.02	7.98	9.5
Mean Number of AS-Units	23,02	11.82	17.42
Mean number of sentences	13.98	7.38	10.68
Dialogue			
Mean number of words	72.21	28.19	50.2
Mean number of errors in grammar	12.96	7.48	10.22
Mean Number of errors in grammar per 100 words	17.94	26.53	20.36
Mean Number of Words per AS-Unit	6.13	2.86	4.49
Mean Number of AS-Units	11.51	10.10	10.80
Mean number of sentences	4.34	0.96	2.65

In the dialogue, the mean number of words produced is 50.2, exactly 29.67% of the mean number of words produced in the monologue although the dialogue was meant to elaborate on the ideas and topics produced in the monologue. After the speaker gains confidence in the monologue, his performance is expected to be better and his language of more quality. On the opposite, together with the very few words produced, The mean number of AS-Units produced in the dialogue is 10.80. That number is misleading as the number of words per AS-Unit does not exceed 4.49, less than 50% of the number of words produced per AS-Unit in the monologue. Another strong reinforcement of the poor language performance is the high mean number of errors per 100 words. It is as enormous as 20.36 errors. On the other hand, the number of sentences produced in the dialogue is just 2.65; almost all the words produced were sporadic as no syntactic body was built to arrange them.

### Error Categories

The error categories, which are omission, addition, substitution, and permutation, serve as a mirror to reflect the balance between L1 and L2 or predominance of any of them in the learner interlanguage system translated in the linguistic norm abundance in this academic context. They also display the nature of the linguistic gaps; interlingual as is the case under study or intralingual which show a higher level of proficiency level. on the part of the language user.

As shown in Table 2, the mean number of errors is 20.12 per 169.20 words – the mean number of words produced in the monologue. More specifically, the error procedures in the monologue are ranking as follows:

- 1) 43.58% of the grammar errors made are substitution errors;
- 2) 41.77% are omission errors;

- 3) 9.22% are addition errors;
- 4) 3.17% are permutation errors.

Clearly, in the preplanned, closed task, the monologue, the speaker has time to prepare, reformulate, and edit what they intend to say and therefore be as accurate as he/she can. In such a mode of speech, the substitution is the most common error category. That is expected as the speaker has time to find the correct grammar structure to convey the message intended. So, the erroneous substitution category seems highly convenient for more expressiveness in this case.

More specifically, the substituting parts of speech and grammar structures imply awareness of the speakers about L2 grammar norms, and that entails a considerable L2 proficiency level. Low proficiency level learners do not have richness of grammar rules and a variety of alternative speech parts in their language repertoire to employ as alternatives for substitution. That raises more expectations of having a higher level of L2 competence and a better language performance in the next task, the dialogue. However, the second most employed erroneous category in the monologue is the omission one. Although it ranked second, it is not very different in amount from the percentage of substitution. Omitting parts of speech represents lack of awareness, a strict deviance from L2 grammar system norms, and a serious break of the language grammar rules. The conviction of the seriousness of such error category is reinforced by the erroneous additions which ranked third with 9.22%. That is, omitting or adding a grammar element represents a serious deviance to grammar norms more than substituting or permuting that element. The oral presentation task is an academic test in which the learners compete to get the best grade.

Also, the foreign language learnt in class is standard; L2 dialects and/or varieties are ruled out. So, the high percentage of erroneous omissions automatically implies lack of awareness of the L2 grammatical system and a low L2 grammar proficiency level. That also leads to two logical interpretations: the learners under study have a low English proficiency level, and the quantity and quality of language of language is prepared and frequently practised before the test. Also, the substitution errors that ranked first does not mean richness in alternative parts of speech and grammar structures in the speakers' language repertoires. Instead, those substitution errors were instances of overgeneralising L1 grammar rules.

**Table 2.** Error procedures reported in the Monologue and Dialogue of all the subjects

	ELCS	ELCA	Total
Monologue			
Mean number of errors	28.3	11.95	20.12
Percentage of substitution errors	51.02%	36.15%	43.58%
Percentage of omission errors	34.34%	49.20%	41.77%
Percentage of addition errors	9.75%	8.70%	9.22%
Percentage of permutation	3.67%	2.67%	3.17%
Dialogue			
Mean number of errors	12.96	7.48	10.22
Percentage of substitution errors	63.58%	24.6%	44.09%
Percentage of omission errors	43.83%	75.94%	59.88%
Percentage of addition errors	24.07%	16.04%	20.05%
Percentage of permutation	9.56%	4.27%	6.91%

In the dialogue, where language production is more spontaneous and more expressive of the speaker's interlanguage competence, the mean number of errors is 10.22 in every 50.2 words produced. As can easily be noted, the language produced in this task is extremely erroneous. More specifically, the error categories ranking has changed as follows:

- 1) 59.88% of the grammar errors are omission errors.
- 2) 44.09% are substitution errors.
- 3) 20.05% are addition errors.
- 4) 6.91% are permutation errors.

In the dialogue, the language produced is so poor syntactically and quantitatively. Similarly, the omission error category has become the most frequent. Although the learners had been given ten days to competitively prepare for their oral test; the choice of good topics and elaborate language with accurate grammar, they produced highly frequent erroneous substitutions. Those systematic errors of substitution and omission reflect the learners' little knowledge of the TL grammar basic norms even if the time taken for preparation and the choice of topics are generously given to the learners. With this level such as it is, enough awareness of the TL grammar norms is very unlikely. On the other hand, the dominance of systematic omission errors in the dialogue seems to depend to a large extent on the L1 norms. For example, many free morphemes in English are treated as bound morphemes the way they are in the learner's mother tongue. Few examples of those bound morphemes in Arabic are subject pronoun + verb; preposition + object pronoun; article + noun; article + adjective, etc.

In the same vein, even the third person singular bound morpheme in English "-s", which has no counterpart morpheme of the same function in Arabic, is considered as plural "-s" of the plural and overgeneralised as such because the plural "-s" is easily acquired and identified first as its pluralisation function can be clearly instilled in the learner's mind and second it has no counterpart in L1, where pluralisation is rather derivational. The bound morpheme "-s" is overgeneralised most of the time as a plural morpheme although it can very well be first person singular or a possessive 's', which is slightly different in structure. Such a grammatical uncertainty is translated in summarizing those three grammar rules into one; pluralisation. That behaviour is due to the lack of practice, and the lack of practice leads to demotivation and ends in instrumentalism in learning a foreign language. In this regard, James (1998) concluded that the lack of grammatical accuracy could be attributable to the restricted chances to produce output. In the dialogue, the omission error category procedure dominates all other erroneous categories, and that goes hand in hand with a steep rise in the number of errors and the sharp decrease in the quality and quantity of the oral output. The linguistic output produced, especially in the dialogue, reflects grammar errors of all kinds, morphological and lexical, indicating that the type of language knowledge is still explicit despite the long years of exposure.

### Error Types

The type of L2 grammar error is so important that it reflects the way the learner acquires language, potential role of the

mother tongue in producing the L2, and the type of language knowledge gained through practice. There are four major error types detected in the oral output of the subjects under study: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete applications of rules, and false concepts hypothesized (Richards 1971).

As shown in Table 3, the error types in the monologue are ranked as follows:

- 1) 25 types of erroneous substitutions;
- 2) 23 types of erroneous omissions;
- 3) 11 erroneous additions;
- 4) 6 erroneous permutations;

Obviously, substitution as well as omission errors are predominant just like wrong additions and permutations; less used and not very different in number. The big number of all errors types together is 65, and that is a clear evidence of the great deal of inaccuracy in the language produced in the monologue despite the fact that it was prepared 10 days in advance.

**Table 3.** The types of errors made by the 50 Subjects both in the Monologue and Dialogue

	ELCS	ELCA	Total
<b>Monologue</b>			
Mean number of erroneous omission types	25	19	23
Mean number of erroneous Substitution types	26	23	25
Mean number of erroneous Addition types	14	7	11
Mean number of erroneous Permutation types	7	5	6
<b>Dialogue</b>			
Mean number of erroneous omission types	16	16	22
Mean number of erroneous Substitution types	28	14	28
Mean number of erroneous Addition types	13	6	14
Mean number of erroneous Permutation types	4	1	4

The same hierarchy of error types of the monologue is recorded in the dialogue; substitution as the most commonly adopted with 28 times while the omission procedure comes second with adopted 22 times, and the addition is the third with 14 times. They all make up 68 types of errors 3 times more than the types made in the monologue given the number of words produced. Surprisingly, with the few words produced in the dialogue, the number of errors types in all procedures has grown far more than they were in the monologue. In other words, errors of different types thrived in the dialogue, reflecting the extremely poor and highly inaccurate language produced in the dialogue.

### Most Common Error Types and Categories

In the monologue, the types of errors recorded are highly uneven; some types are very common while others are common, and yet others are less common as indicated in the chart below. In this respect, it is significant to point out to the fact that the ranking of the erroneous categories measured in the chart above is a variable different from the extent to which single types of error are common regardless of the category they belong to. In a word, the commonality of error types is not consistent with the commonality of erroneous categories.

#### Omission of articles

Although the most dominant error category is the substitution, the incomparably most common error type recorded is the omission of article with a mean average of 3.3 errors i.e., *bobulation 4 million beoble* K. H. R1. That is very expected of the learners whose proficiency level in the target language is low and whose interlanguage is still fully based on the grammar system of their mother tongue. Furthermore, the omission of article is a predicted error as the definite article in Arabic (*al-*) is bound morpheme i.e. (*Altaks haar al-yawm = the weather is hot today*) and the indefinite article is implicit in Arabic, the learners' mother tongue i.e. (*London madeenatun kabeera = London (is) (a) big city*). The omission process is due to the fact that indefiniteness in Arabic is marked by the absence of the definite article (Schulz, 2004). In the same line, Elgibali (2005:36) compared the article status in both languages, "In English, the indefinite article is used with the countable noun in the singular form whereas in Arabic there is no indefinite article". This grammar aspect was reinforced in the finding of Alhaysony's (2012) analysis on errors committed by Saudi female EFL learners in their use of articles in their written samples. By and large, L1 interference negatively affected the process of foreign language acquisition of the articles.

#### Substitution of countable and uncountable nouns

The second most common error made in the monologue is the erroneous substitution of countable and uncountable nouns. Such error is not developmental as it abides by a system already established in the interlanguage of the learner. i.e., *Fast food are expensive* TH. GH. N1. Fast food in Arabic is a plural noun. So, Arab learners of English tend to pluralise uncountable nouns as it suits their L1 system. Countability of nouns is not homogeneous between the two languages L1 and L2; many uncountable nouns in English are countable in Arabic i.e. (*population, information, fast food*). In other words, as they intersect, interlingual factors affect learners' second language perception.

#### Omission of copula

The third most common error in the monologue is the omission of copula with a mean average of 1.7 Errors. I.E. *My number id 0907471*" a. F. R1. That is another

major systematic error that is clearly L1 negative transfer-based. Back to arabic, the learners' mother tongue, the copula is implicit. In the same line, (keshavarz (2006) made it clear that there is no explicit copula as an independent morpheme in arabic. For that reason, arab efl learners have to struggle to distinguish between the grammar norms of their L1 and the L2 being studied. Such an elliptical syntactic element in arabic is negatively transferred to english, causing a syntactic gap. In the same respect, butler-tanaka (2000) were more specific about that when they claimed that the omission of the copula is more frequent in the present tense than in other tenses. Just like arabic (abu-chacra 2007) who said that arabic does not have the copula in the present tense.

#### Misuse of singular and plural forms

The three other most common errors are the following. First, the misuse of singular instead of plural forms is the fourth most common error with a mean average of 1.4 i.e. and then continue the (0.7") two packet (1.7") in a day S. M. U2. This particular error seems different in nature from the others. The deficit in providing the plural suffix "-s" to the word "packet" can be interpreted on more than one basis. First, the grammar system of the TL is not well-applied where the learner is still not aware that the regular plural forms in English need the suffix "-s" in a three morphological forms' "-s", "-es", and "-ies". In this case, the error is developmental although it displays a basic gap in the TL knowledge on the part of the learner who shows a low level of L2 competence. It can also be interpreted as an inference based on L1 norms where the number and the noun i.e. "two + packets" are not two free morphemes in Arabic.

They are rather two morphemes bound together in a single word. So, once the learner, with a rare exposure to L2, finds them as two free morphemes, they resort to apply the rule of L1 related to the number; dual numbers in Arabic are bound morphemes making up one compound morpheme (*Waladain= two boys*). In numbers, from 3 till 10, the noun is pluralized and behaves as a free morpheme i.e. (nine boys) whereas numbers from 11 and above, the noun takes a singular form and also behaves as a free morpheme (*ihda'achar walad = eleven boys*) as the number is enough to convey pluralisation. (i.e. forty man) although the number is not above 10. Unlike in English, there is no irregular plural in Arabic. So, with a lack of competence in English, the errors like *three mans* are well-expected.

#### Substitution of tense

Tense is the fifth most common type of error with a mean average of 1.34 i.e., *It starts {fe (0.2")}* from (0.6") *seventeenth century until now* Y. H. A4. The verb was not conjugated into the present perfect although the adverb of time requires that. Tense wise, there is a big difference in conjugation rules between Arabic and English. There are only two tenses in Arabic; the perfect (the past) and the imperfect (the simple present and simple future). However, there are 9 tenses in

English; the perfect, the perfect progressive, and the simple that go with the past, the present, and the future. This goes hand in hand with Abu-Chacra's (2007) conclusion that most Arab EFL students have difficulties in the use of English verbs due to the absence of verb conjugation in Arabic. The perfect type of tense is implicit in Arabic. Morphologically as well, the perfect tense in English requires a helping verb "had" for the past, "have or has" in the present, and "will have" for the future. That grammar rule does not have an equivalent in Arabic. Moreover, the helping verb that does that job is not available as a grammar entity in Arabic. In his study, AbiSamra (2003) found that tense errors are very common among Arab students as there is no time sequence in their language.

### **The subject-verb (SV) agreement**

The sixth most common error is the subject-verb agreement with an average of 1.32 errors i.e. *My father tell me that A. O. U2*. This type of systematic error raises a major issue about the type of English instilled in the learner's repertoire. First of all, the third person suffix "-s" is very confusing given the rare exposure to the TL as a foreign language. The suffix "-s" is mostly acquired and digested as a signal of the regular plural form suffix that can only be added to nouns but not to verbs as the students is more familiar with it in that function that was learnt first at the basic level and kept unpractised. That is reinforced by the fact that there is no suffix in the learner's mother tongue that has one form but plays more than one function. Put differently, the pluralisation function of that suffix which is first learnt is the one that will remain the basic norm that the learner seems to abide by, and it is even more potentially digested in the learner's mind as it has a clear function in the learner's L1, pluralisation. On the opposite, there is no suffix in the learner's L1 that plays the function of a third person singular in the present simple and that is applied to singular subjects as *he, she, it* in English. However, it is challenging for the learner whose exposure to the TL is rare to accept a second very different function of the same suffix (possessive 's), let alone a third (third person "-s"). The suffix "-s" declares the regular noun plural but hard to accept it added to a verb in the present simple to declare that the subject is singular. That is very confusing unless abundant exposure and practice makes the difference.

The second function opposes the first. How it declares the plural form when added to a noun and singular when added to a verb in the present simple. What makes the suffix more confusing is the apostrophe 's added to a noun to signal possession. Indeed, many students cannot clearly distinguish between the suffix "-s" and apostrophe "s" due to their similar forms, varied functions, lack of equivalents in the mother tongue, and lack of practice. As for the helping verb used in the present continuous, the singular form "is" is the commonly used one to the extent that it is overgeneralised to include both the singular and the plural (as in *Many people in Abha is working*. H.N. U2) and the present and the past tense (as in *He is happy more at that time* Gh. H. R1). In other words, the majority of the learners

tend to use the singular helping verb "is" more often with both the singular and plural subjects and in both the present and the past continuous tenses. The plural form of the helping verb "are" is kept undigested by the majority of the learners in this academic context. A possible interpretation of such a grammatical behaviour is the way conjugations are derived in Arabic; all verb derivations occur partially in Arabic i.e. (yadhabu (goes), dhahaba (went)). Even more, the conjugation of irregular verbs produces completely new forms. So, the subject-verb agreement is most of the time plural subject used with the singular helping verb "is" not the other way round.

### **Omission and substitution of prepositions**

The seventh and eight most common errors are related to the same function word – preposition. There is a mean average of 1.06 wrong prepositions and 0.96 erroneous omissions of preposition. The grammar element is the same yet the types of errors are two: substitution and omission. The learner either carries out a wrong substitution of prepositions i.e. *and then continue two packet in a day* S. M. U2 or omits it all together *where they get the money?* Y. H. U2. In Arabic, there are 21 prepositions (mawdoo3.com), however, in English, there are about 150 prepositions (Koffi 2010). Also, one preposition in Arabic can have three equivalents in English i.e. the preposition of time (fi = in, on; at). So, a major part of this dual errors of preposition is morphological and the no one-to-one relationships of prepositions across the two languages, L1 and L2; some prepositions have equivalent in the other language while others do not.

In this case, the EFL learner may not be aware of grammar rule restrictions given the polysemous nature of the English prepositions that account for those dual errors (Koffi (2010, p. 299). Furthermore, most prepositions in Arabic are free morphemes if they are followed by nouns (min Ahmad = from Ahmad) and bound morphemes they are followed by pronouns (minho = from him). However, in both cases, they are always free morphemes in English. Back in the literature, Scott and Tucker (1974) study of preposition found that errors ranked second but in Mukattash's (1981) they ranked fourth among general grammatical errors. Those two ranks showed the grammatical challenge faced by the Arab EFL learner in acquiring and producing English prepositions, especially at the beginning of the FL learning process. To be more specific, Abu Chacra (2007) claims that simple prepositions were incorrectly used in a high frequency by Arab learners of English due to the transfer of Arabic prepositional knowledge to English.

In sum, the finding in the present study echoed AbiSamra's (2003) assertion that interference from learners' mother tongue was the main cause of errors.

As shown in Table 4, the most common types of language errors in the monologue are mainly the following: the Omission of Articles, the Count versus Uncountable Nouns, the Omission of Copula, and Plural vs. Singular.

**Table 4.** The most common error types reported in the Monologue and Dialogue of the 50 Subjects

Monologue	Dialogue
The most common error types	
3.3 Omission of article	1.2 omission of copula
1.7 Count vs. uncountable nouns	1.18 omission of article nouns
1.64 Omission of copula	1.06 omission of subject
1.4 Plural vs. singular (regular plural)	0.74 substitution of tense
1.34 Tense	0.64 omission of preposition
1.32 SV	0.56 addition of article
1.06 Wrong Preposition	0.56 substitution of plural with singular
0.96 Omission of a preposition	0.52 omission of conjunction

The dialogue is more expressive of the learner's L2 knowledge and interlanguage make-up as it is online language planning, coding, formulation, and production. It is so spontaneous that the speaker does not have much time to rethink, edit, or elaborate the language to be produced. As such, the online task in the oral presentation under study is characterized by four important facts: the grammar errors were obviously more frequent in the dialogue than in the monologue given the number of words produced whereas the overwhelming category of errors is the omission with 71.21% of all errors. The omission category is an explicit break of the L2 norms as it drops whole structural entities; lexical or morphological grammar elements. The big density of errors is accompanied with poor quality of language; no sentences or clauses produced. Furthermore, the conscious explicit knowledge does not help the speakers to be spontaneous and with high automaticity of processing in that it takes care of the rules of grammar at the expense of language elaborateness. In spite of that, a high density of errors was recorded. That implies that the EFL learners under study are not yet aware of the TL grammatical norms, nor have they developed some implicit language knowledge; their conversations lack much of smooth flow of words and elaborate language.

## DISCUSSION

In spite of the many years of exposure to the TL, the errors are still basic and diverse; of all morphological and lexical types possible. Those types have persisted for a long period of time- L1-negative-transfer based and fossilized (Selinker 1972). In fact, there seems to be no progress in language learning or language acquisition as all types of errors the beginner EFL learner can make are recorded. Almost are interlingual rather than developmental, displaying the utterly explicit type of TL knowledge which renders the learner unable to communicate in that language accurately and spontaneously. The persistence of those interlingual linguistic errors is basically indicative of an academic culture not of a sudden coincidence in time. It intuitively raises compelling

questions about the academically established relationship between the learner, the teacher, and the whole academic philosophy.

With the basic interlingual errors persistence, the learner's exposure to the TL does not exceed a few months. Another fact indicates that the successive teachers have not been aware of the language problems the learner has been facing (Chaaroui, 2017). As there is no vision that regulates the teacher and learner partnership where each party assumes certain roles and responsibilities.

As far as the learner is concerned, it recommended that they should be trained semester by semester and year by year in meetings, workshops, and direct questions and answers to express themselves about the following matters: 1) to discuss and choose the most interesting curricula topics for the learners to guarantee their motivation (Chaaroui, 2017), 2) to give feedback in questionnaires and surveys about teaching methods, techniques, and the best way for error correction among other factors, 3) to look for information from sources other than the teacher, etc. Year by year, the learner would gain more confidence in themselves as real partners (Chaaroui, 2017), and in return more trust is given by the teacher-partner. Indeed, when the learner possesses the TL forms, they would apply and automatize them properly in communicative demands at a later stage (Nunan 2007). In that stage, the relationship between meaning and form would be transparent (Nunan 2001:193).

As for the teacher, they do not seem to play the role of a learner's partner given the fact that the same basic errors have been persisting over and over again. The T-L partnership does spring from the teacher's awareness of the learner errors and TL challenges so that they invent and create teaching methods and techniques and teaching materials and activities to remedy to helps to correct them, and to prevents them from being part of the learner's language anymore. Actually, among the teacher's basic tasks is to have a record of the learners' errors and to invent pedagogical ways to help the learner acquire the accurate TL easily and fast to prevent them from being fossilised. For example, those errors could be included in tests, both mock and official, to draw the learner's attention not to make them again. Basic to the teacher's job is to analyse the error's origins (Crystal, 2010) and to be equipped with the necessary explanation and pedagogical strategies of treating errors according to their complexity and with proper teaching technique(s) and activities. Teaching objectives should also prioritise L1 and L2 differences (Richards, Platt, J. and Platt, H 1992).

Socially, the teacher should develop a good relationship with the learner by showing fairness, cooperation, humour, and trust in their intention and endeavour. Besides, it would be quite helpful to create channels of communication like social media applications, emails, backboard system, and teaching aids such as realia, chats, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, radio, films, music, maps, pictures, computers, etc. (Iedema (2003). Learners' efforts should be encouraged inside and outside class. Also, learners should be welcome to practise the TL individually and in pairs and in groups to encourage competition. Also, they should be consented in

how errors are better be corrected (Li, 2012) to guarantee involvement and self-esteem.

From the types of linguistic errors recorded, there seems to be no pedagogical reality that puts the teacher with learner in a productive pedagogical give-and-take relationship that sets the roles and responsibilities of each of them and has clear pedagogical and concrete objectives.

In sum, the teacher and learner are very far from being partners. They rather come to class to study a subject that the learner does not seem to be enthusiastic about, nor does the teacher seem to have enough knowledge to manage the situation or authority to hold the student responsible to abide by it.

The inexistence of T-L partnership raises questions about the academic system in itself. For example, the number of learners per class may not consolidate the academic vision of partnership, nor does the testing system take into account the test regularity, rubrics, and contents. The TL language practice, especially in the productive skills, for example, does not cannot to be included in tests rubrics. Also, designing the curricula developmentally does not seem to be taking place. Topics included in the curricula do not seem to be appealing, motivating and interesting to the learners. Teachers seem to have not had enough training, workshops, and forums in which they learned and practiced how to deal with students of different language proficiency levels and of different TL challenges.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With such high level of language inaccuracy recorded in the learner's language performance after nearly seven years of exposure to English as a TL, the learner does not seem to be able to function as a partner. They are rather a passive receiver of information from the teacher who seems to be the sole source of information and alienated from the learner's needs. The results of the current research calls for explicit radical academic intervention in the curricula design, professional teacher, giving the learner a role to play as a partner at a young age towards more autonomy to communicate with the teacher and help choose and discuss teaching materials topics, teaching techniques, and testing techniques.

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