



## **An Investigation into Vocabulary Errors Made by Kuwait University Students in Relation to the Teaching Techniques Used at Kuwaiti State Schools**

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### ***Abstract:***

In this study, an error analysis is conducted with the purpose of finding out the kind of vocabulary errors which Kuwait University students make in composing their academic writing essays. Two kinds of errors were detected, i.e. interlingual errors and intralingual errors. It has been found that these students, whose level of English is intermediate, tend to make more interlingual errors than intralingual errors. The researcher then traces back these errors to the English syllabi used in teaching English in Kuwaiti state schools. It is shown how the techniques currently employed in teaching English vocabulary in these schools are the main factor affecting the L2 learning process. It is demonstrated how such techniques are inconsistent with the efficient and up-to-date approaches to vocabulary teaching. The researcher concludes this study by offering a number of suggestions and recommendations for the Ministry of Education in Kuwait to consider in setting a future curriculum plan for the teaching of English vocabulary in Kuwaiti state schools.

### ***1) Introduction:***

The present research contains an analysis of lexical errors made by Kuwait University students majoring in various fields of study. These errors are examined as to whether they are interlingual or intralingual (for the difference between these two kinds of errors see

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section 2). These errors are then traced back to their source and are viewed in relation to the teaching of vocabulary at Kuwaiti state schools where these students originally received their secondary school education. In particular, these errors are related to three main potential factors: the attitudes of the students themselves, the professionalism of the teachers and, most importantly, the effectiveness of the teaching methods involved in the materials used (see sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3).

To pave the way for this error analysis, the study begins by demonstrating the difference between interlingual errors and intralingual errors. It then offers a review of the attitudes of the students and those of the teachers at the mentioned schools. Later, it proceeds as to focus on the technical nature of the teaching materials employed. To achieve this, a number of texts used in the teaching of vocabulary at these schools are examined as to what extent such materials are consistent with the effective techniques normally involved in up-to-date approaches to the teaching of vocabulary. Finally, some recommendations are proposed as to how the lexical errors located can best be eliminated in the light of new approaches to the teaching of vocabulary. Devising actual up-to-date teaching materials, however, is beyond the scope of this research.

It should be pointed out that the terms "first language (L1)", "native language" and "mother tongue" are all used interchangeably in the present study. Similarly, "foreign language", "second language (L2)", and "target language (TL)" are also treated as identical terms used to denote the same language form.

## **2) *Interlingual versus Intralingual Errors:***

The technical terms interlingual and intralingual have been widely used in several studies (James, 1972; Ringbom, 1987; Van Els et al, 1987). For example, James (1972) defines intralingual errors and interlingual errors as follows:

Intralingual errors are those totally accountable by reference to the TL. While interlingual errors are assumed to be occasioned by the learners transferring the patterns of his L1 onto TL (James: 1972, 77).

In other words, it can be maintained that while interlingual errors are those errors made as a result of the learner's transferring rules from the native language into the target language, intralingual errors are those made as a result of his overgeneralizing the TL rules themselves within the same language. For example, an Arabic learner of English using the word "tall" instead of "long" to describe the English word "river" is clearly affected by the Arabic language which uses one word "tawil" to cover both "tall" and "long" in English. This error is thus classified as interlingual. The same

learner may make an intralingual error by following the regular pattern of English plural, producing a word such as "childs" instead of "children", as the plural form of the word "child" (for the discussion of the interlingual errors and intralingual errors found in the data of the present research, see Appendix 1).

### ***3) The English Curriculum at Kuwaiti State Schools: A Critical View***

#### ***3.1 The Attitude of Teachers:***

The attitude (Appendix II) of most teachers to English teaching in state schools in Kuwait may best be likened to that adopted by many foreign language teachers, as criticized by Rivers (1981):

Many teachers [...] have never really thought through their objectives in relation to the situation in which they are teaching and to the goals of the students in their classes [...]. Frequently such teachers teach as they were taught by teachers who taught as they were taught, and techniques appropriate to another era, which had different objectives, are perpetuated (Rivers: 1981, 7).

To the researcher's knowledge, English teachers in Kuwaiti state schools usually have bachelors degrees in English literature. They are graduates of various universities mainly in the Middle East and some in the Far East. Apart from Kuwaiti teachers, there are teachers from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, India, Pakistan etc. The problem seems to be twofold. First. In view of the fact that most of them received their university education in countries where English is not the native language, their exposure to English was inadequate, and, therefore,

their ability to use it effectively is often limited. Second, these teachers are, in most cases, not adequately trained. As a matter of fact, their appointment as teachers of English in schools is primarily based on their academic qualifications, irrespective of any professional skills needed for developing appropriate teaching techniques.

### ***3.2 The Attitude of Learners:***

Teachers inefficient techniques and lack of pedagogical experience greatly affect the attitude (Appendix?) of students to the learning of English in Kuwaiti state schools. Indeed, most students become demotivated and disoriented as a consequence, considering English mainly an academic subject which they have to pass in order to fulfill one of their class requirements. This is usually not a difficult task for them. In their criticism of the attitudes of Arab learners of English in schools, Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) remark:

The attitude to English as a foreign language is, furthermore, that it is a school subject rather than a means of communication. The pass mark is often very low, which means that learners can proceed to further learning without having first mastered fully what they ought to have mastered in, say, a given school year (Kharma and Hajjaj: 1989, 2).

### ***3.3 Demerits of the Teaching Materials:***

Teaching vocabulary in Kuwaiti state schools seems far from being efficient (Appendix II). Coursebooks are crowded with lengthy pair lists of words, and students are invited to commit these words to memory (see sections 5.1 and 5.3). In spite of the fact that these lists of words are usually unilingual in a brand new copy, they very often change into bilingual on any average used copy through students annotations (see section 5.1). Teachers often begin their lessons by giving their students the translation-equivalents of all the L2 words included in the lists. Consequently, students are rarely encouraged to guess the meaning of these words from the textual context in which they occur, or refer to a bilingual dictionary to help them understand the meaning of such words (see section 5.1). Teachers usually advise

their students to keep some pocket notebooks in which they can write these lists of English words together with their Arabic equivalents and revise them in their leisure time. The result of this, however, is, in most cases, not satisfactory, as explained by Wallace (1982):

Foreign learners are very fond of noting down new vocabulary items as they come across them. This enthusiasm is very heartening for the teacher, but his enthusiasm is liable to wane when he looks at the notes that they have been taking.

They are often a chaotic jumble of isolated words and phrases, often collected in different notebooks, hopeless from the point of view of either retrieval or memorization (Wallace: 1982, 61).

Learning in context can, thus, be considered the most important word learning strategies in state schools in Kuwait (see section 5.3). In fact, it is hardly given any attention in the average EFL class. It is these drawbacks that motivated the present researchers to carry out a lexical error analysis and trace the lexical errors made by the participants back to such drawbacks. First, some vocabulary evaluation criteria will be looked at in order to establish the kind of criteria by which the effectiveness of the vocabulary teaching materials employed in Kuwaiti state schools can appropriately be measured.

#### ***4) Evaluation Criteria for Vocabulary Materials:***

In his comment on the presentation and practice of new L2 vocabulary items, Cunningsworth (1988) offers a checklist of evaluation criteria. These criteria are related to the following statement:

- (A) Presenting new lexis (e.g. in word lists, with visuals, in a text).  
Teaching the meaning of new lexis (e.g. through context, through explanation, by translation.
- (B) Recycling new lexis adequately.
- (C) The amount of new lexis taught in each unit, text etc. (This can be Expressed as a percentage of new lexis in relation to familiar lexis ). (Adapted from Cunningsworth: 1988, 77)

The above criteria will be used below in assessing the vocabulary materials used in Kuwaiti state schools.

### **5) Vocabulary Teaching in Kuwaiti State Schools:**

It should be made clear that the English coursebooks used at state schools in Kuwait, though frequently changed for improvement, often share certain drawbacks; they are generally inconsistent with up-to-date approaches to foreign language teaching. For example, in terms of vocabulary, the main focus of the present research, lexical items are usually presented out of context in the form of bilingual lists appearing at the end of every lesson, and are often introduced in unmanageably large quantities (see sections 5.1 and 5.3). Furthermore, these lexical items are rarely repeated in subsequent texts, which render them difficult to retain (see section 5.2).

In relation to Cunningsworths evaluation criteria, three main drawbacks can, thus, be detected in the vocabulary teaching materials used at Kuwaiti state schools. These are:

- (I) New L2 words are learnt out of context in bilingual word lists.
- (II) New L2 words are not repeated in subsequent texts.
- (III) New L2 words are introduced in large quantities, beyond the learners Capacity.

Each of these drawbacks will be examined in the sections below.

#### **5.1 The Presentation of L2 Vocabulary in Bilingual Word Lists:**

As mentioned above, the lexical items in the English coursebooks prescribed at state schools in Kuwait are usually presented out of context in the form of bilingual lists. The following list, taken from English for the Emirates (2002), Pupil's Book 7 (p. 98) as taught at Kuwaiti state schools (General Education Branch), is an example of such lists:

Choose/chose/chosen	stranger	sharpener
Paradise	activity	bowl
Advice	intelligent	lady
Obey	train	university
For ever	lead	indeed
State	criminal	proverb
USA	faithful	helpful
America	hunt	polite

Promise	cry	none
Accountant	lucky	lock
Alone	selfish	arrest
Outdoor	divide	prison
Indoor	fair	
Shy	dial	

Commenting on the learning of vocabulary in bilingual word lists similar to the one above, Van Els et al (1987, 251-52) raise four main objections to this teaching approach. These are as follows:

The first is the fear that learners might assume the existence of one-to-one correspondence between L1 and L2 words. Although learners might sometimes succeed in equating some L1 and L2 words (especially in related languages like English and German or English and French), in a great number of cases they fail (especially in unrelated languages such as Arabic and English). This is supported by the observations made in the process of analyzing the data of the present research. For example, consider the following bilingual list taken from English for Commerce (No. 43, p. 69), taught to secondary school students at Kuwaiti state schools (English for Commerce Education Branch):

***Vocabulary list:***

Chamber of Commerce and Industry:	غرفة التجارة والصناعة
Official sources:	مصادر رسمية
Support:	يسانء - يدعم
Economy:	اقتصاد
missions:	بعثاء إرسالياء
organize:	ينظم
defend:	يدافع
voice:	صوت
exist:	يوجد
Members:	أعضاء
representatives:	ممثلون
community:	المجتمع (الوسط)

association:	رابطة
establishments:	مؤسسات
issues:	قضايا
climate:	مناخ
earned:	يكسب - ينال
confidence:	ثقة
fairs:	أسواق، معارض (سوق دولي)
exhibitions:	معارض

The Arabic word "Sawt", which is equivalent to the word "voice" in the above list, can be used to cover three words in English, i.e. "voice", "sound" and "noise", in the following three contexts:

- 1) Many teenagers say Celine Dion has a nice voice.
- 2) If the sound of television is too loud then he cannot hear anybody (the word "sound" was replaced with the word "voice" by a student participating in this research, see example 11, Appendix 1)
- 3) There is a funny noise coming from that car.

The use of the word "voice" instead of "sound" in sentence 2, as mentioned in the data of this research, is expected. The student making this error may have understood from a list such as the above that any of the three words "voice", "sound" or "noise" can be used to cover the Arabic word "Sawt" regardless of the context.

The second objection is that bilingual word lists are presented independently of the context which normally assists in the comprehension of new L2 words (see section 5.3). Context can be of great help to learners, especially when subtle differences in meaning exist between words (Rudska et al 1982). It should be pointed out that the word 'context' not only refers to the semantic profile of the word, but also extends to its grammatical dimensions. Nations (1990), for instance, cautions that the word is an entity of semantic, phonetic and grammatical units. Consider the case of the word "arrive", for example. Apart from teaching the semantic and phonetic variations of this word, an English teacher should draw the attention of his students to the fact that, from a grammatical point of view, this verb is

usually used with the prepositions “in” or “at” rather than “to” which is normally used in a similar context in Arabic (see Appendix 1). Another example is the verb “defend”. Although this verb normally takes no preposition in English, its Arabic equivalent “udaafi” is followed by the Arabic preposition “an” (literally meaning “about”) in a similar context; hence the following mistake made by one student participating in the present research (see Appendix 1, example 27):

- Everybody should work hard to defend about his opinion.

Also, learners must always be made conscious of the fact that most English words are polysemous, and that context is, therefore, indispensable to the specification of the meaning of the L2 word under consideration. Carter and McCarthy (1992) caution that in English only a few words have one meaning and that the majority of words have multiple meanings.

The third objection is that bilingual word lists can encourage interference from L1 which, consequently, impedes the process of L2 production, in the sense that L2 words do not present themselves directly when needed but are ‘retrieved’ through their L1 counterparts. The students use of “voice” instead of “sound” is a good example in this regard.

The last objection Van Els et al raise is that bilingual word lists generally fail to ‘stimulate’ the learner and can well demotivate him, inasmuch as it consumes a great deal of time and effort (see section 3.2 about the attitude of students to learning English in Kuwaiti state schools). Brown describes this way of learning as ‘dull’:

Learning vocabulary by learning lists of words translated into the mother tongue is both dull and has some dangers from the point of view of concept formation and usage (Brown: 1974, 2).

In short, it can be said that teaching L2 vocabulary in bilingual word lists is generally counterproductive if effective learning is to be sought.

### ***5.2 Lack of Repetition of New L2 Words:***

One of the demerits of the way new L2 words are incorporated in

the teaching materials used in Kuwaiti state schools is that once these words are introduced in a certain context, they rarely reappear in a subsequent one (see Aljazaar et al, 2002). In designing these materials, little consideration seems to have been given to the pedagogical principle that new words have to be met regularly and systematically before they can be successfully retained (Judd: 1978, 74; Wallace: 1982, 29; and Cunningsworth: 1988, 40). Beheydt (1987) observes that the repetition of the new vocabulary items is vital to the process of their retention:

[...] we could state that the new word must be used again  
And again in a variety of contexts. Indeed, as much from  
the point of view of learning psychology as from the  
linguistic point of view, this is a necessary condition  
(Beheydt: 1987, 64).

Considering the amount of time and effort devoted to the learning of L2 words, Nation (1990) confirms the importance of repeating these words, stressing that in any language lesson it is the old rather than the new vocabulary items that should be emphasized:

Another important idea is that it is the old material in any lesson which is more important than the new material. The reason for this is that the old material has almost been mastered by the learners. If it is not repeated then it will be forgotten and all the previous work will be wasted. The new material, on the other hand, has not had a lot of time and effort spent on it. If no further attention is given to it, it will be forgotten, but not much previous time and effort will be wasted. It is therefore quite important for a teacher to keep a rough check on the vocabulary that needs to be established so that there are enough repetitions and not a lot of wasted effort and attention (Nation: 1990, 45)

In testing his Indian learners retention of English words, Kachroo (1962) reports that it is the words which occurred seven or more times in the English coursebook used that were best learnt by these learners. On the other hand, he finds that over half of the words appearing only once or twice in this coursebook were not known by most of his

learners. Moreover, in other studies, while Crothers and Suppes (1967) conclude that six or seven are necessary, Saagi et al (1978) report that even as many as sixteen or more are required.

As far as the length of intervals needed between the introduction of a certain L2 word and its subsequent repetitions, Pimsleur (1967) believes that repetitions should be spaced with increasing gaps in between. In other words, in the initial stages, repetitions should occur frequently. Later, however, they can be spaced further apart. It is interesting that Carpay (1975, 264), a Dutch psychologist, finds in his empirical research that, for successful retention, a new word needs to be met in four different contexts in the same lesson in which it is introduced, and at least once in three consecutive lessons. He summarizes this argument in his formula  $4 + 1 + 1 + 1$ .

### 5.3 *Quantity of New L2 Words:*

One of the problems which students at Kuwaiti state schools often encounter in their foreign language classes is that, in a great number of cases, too many words are introduced in a limited context. For example, consider the following paragraph taken from a lesson entitled “The Secretary” in the coursebook English for Commerce (No. 43, p. 55), taught to secondary school students at Kuwaiti state schools (English for Commerce Education Branch):

Basma is highly respected. Her personal appearance is pleasing. Her personality, behaviour and attitude are always acceptable. She applies the three C’s of effective human relations: courtesy, cooperativeness, and cheerfulness.

The new words that are supposed to be learnt are those written in bold. We can see that the text is crowded with unfamiliar words and can hardly provide any context that can help students understand the meanings of such words. Students, therefore, are obliged to resort to the bilingual list provided under this text for learning the meanings of these words:

3.2 appearance:

مظهر

personality:

شخصية

behaviour:

سلوك

attitude:	ميل، اتجاه، موقف
effective:	فعال-مؤثر
relations:	علاقات، صلات
courtesy:	كياسة، لباقة، مجاملة
cooperativeness:	القدرة على التعاون، الرغبة في التعاون
cheerfulness:	ابتهاج، مرح

Another example is taken from a lesson entitled “Kuwait Car Market” in the coursebook English for Commerce (No. 43, p.111), taught to secondary school students at Kuwaiti state schools (English for Commerce Education Branch):

Now the car agencies and dealers are filling their showrooms with the latest models. The dealers offer warranties and service policies.

The words in bold are supposed to be the new words which students have to concentrate on. There are too many unfamiliar words in a limited context. It is clear that the supposedly familiar words in the above text fail to provide the context required for helping students understand the meanings of these new words. "The dealers", for example, can “offer” a wide range of services. They do not have to offer specifically “warranties and service policies”. This text, therefore, can be said to lack adequate context.

Beheydt (1987) warns that a certain context should not contain too many new lexical items. He writes:

[...] the context of a new word should ideally consist of already-acquired vocabulary. If too many elements of the context are unknown, its functionality gets lost (Beheydt: 1987, 64).

Beheydt maintains that a context with too many unfamiliar words provides no ‘cognitive’ or ‘semantic’ clues essential to the acquisition process of L2 words. Wallace (1982, 28) specifies certain limits to the quantity of the unfamiliar L2 words introduced in any reading text, claiming that:

If there are too many new words, the learner may become Confused, discouraged and frustrated. For example, the “Frustration level” above which someone reading a passage In the target language will tend to give up, unless

he has recourse to a dictionary, has been estimated at 10 percent Or more unknown words (Wallace: 1982, 28).

For Cunningsworth (1988), however, the limit is rather 5%. In this connection, he remarks that:

The amount of new lexis to be taught in any one unit is a debatable point, but as a rule of thumb, the number of new words in a text should not amount to more than about five percent of the total, so in 300 word text up to fifteen words could be introduced (Cunningsworth: 1988, 40)

It can be concluded that introducing too many L2 words in a limited context is generally inconsistent with the requirements of successful learning of L2 vocabulary.

## **6) Outline of the Present Research:**

### **6.1 Purpose of the Research:**

The aim of the present study is twofold. First, it seeks to analyze the lexical errors found in 50 composition essays written by Kuwait University students majoring in various fields of study<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to assess the relative occurrence of interlingual and intralingual errors. In other words, it aims at finding out whether more interlingual or intralingual errors are made by such students. Second, it attempts to trace back each error to the source originally causing that particular kind of error. In the light of such errors, the researchers look at the vocabulary teaching materials and methods used at Kuwaiti state schools in order to prove that such materials and methods are a main factor causing these errors. Finally, certain suggestions and recommendations are offered as to how the teaching materials and methods employed at Kuwaiti state schools can best be improved.

### **6.2 Subjects and Data of the Research:**

The data were collected from the compositions written by two groups of students of an intermediate level in the second semester of the academic year 2004. While the first group comprised 23 students, the second contained 27 students, the total number of students was thus 50. Most of the students were almost the same age, the age average

having been 19. The subject taught, referred to as "Academic Writing (108)", is offered every year by the English Department in the Faculty of Arts. All students in the two groups had received their school education in state schools in Kuwait. In these schools some of these students followed the "General English Education Program", while others followed the "English for Commerce Education Program". It was made certain that no students educated at Kuwaiti private schools were involved in the research as they study a different English syllabus.

The participants were invited to write a well-organized essay on one of the two following topics "You have the opportunity to visit a foreign country for two weeks. Which country would you like to visit and why? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice"; and "Television has destroyed communication among friends and family. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion". Fifty one lexical errors were found in these compositions. For the discussion of these errors, see Appendix (1). Before analyzing these errors, however, it might be interesting to look at other errors discussed in some related studies.

### ***6.3 Review of Related Studies:***

The literature of second language acquisition has numerous examples of studies relating the errors made in the process of learning a second language to the native language itself (Hayes, 2003; Yamane, 2003; Porcel, 2002; Wu, 1996; Chen 1995; Chen, 1992; Mobaidin 1988). These types of errors, referred to as "transfer errors" in such studies, are more technically termed "interlingual errors" in the present study. Among other errors, some of the errors analyzed in the literature were syntactic and others were lexical. For example, in her error analysis involving six different proficiency levels of Russian, Hayes (2003, 249) found that her English learners of Russian had made several "transfer errors" in the areas of lexicon and syntax as a result of their mother tongue interference with the target language. The proportion of these errors, she claimed, was larger than those committed as a result of overgeneralization of the L2 linguistic items (technically called "intra-lingual errors" in the present study). To quote her, her study

shows that "L1 English influence in L2 Russian is broad". She also found that "lexical transfer decreases as proficiency increases", an area that requires further investigation. Similarly, upon examining a number of syntactic structures and lexical items used by his Japanese adult learners of English, Yamane (2003: 150) demonstrated how phrase structures and lexical items were often transferred from the mother tongue into the target language.

Porcel (2002, 303) conducted an analysis of errors made by his Spanish learners of English in the use of various verb forms. He observed "a clear tendency towards language shift from Spanish to English". In other words, the subjects, in their use of several verbs in English, were affected by the use of several verb structures in Spanish. Likewise, in his analysis of some syntactic errors in the writing of Chinese learners of English at the three levels of low-intermediate, intermediate and advanced, Chen (1995: 270) found that L1 transfer errors were "pervasive" at all these levels. Wu (1996: 242) was also involved in detecting the kind of errors L2 learners make in the process of their L2 learning. He analyzed lexical and syntactic errors made by 108 Chinese college students of two different Chinese institutions. He found that several of these errors made in a number of linguistic features were the result of the learners' transferring some basic forms from their mother tongue into the target language.

Chen (1992: 144), in his analysis of some English language structures produced also by Chinese learners of English, found that L2 learners draw heavily on their L1 in their use of idioms as lexical items in English. In other words, the subjects were actively involved in transferring idioms from Chinese to English. In conclusion, Chen recommended that FL teachers, in several situations, "take the learners' first language into consideration" in view of the expected impact of L1 on the learning of L2. In the same way, Mobaidin (1988, 238) demonstrated in his error analysis the role of L1 in the learning of L2 syntactic structures. He showed in his research how many of his Jordanian university students had engaged in transferring Arabic structures into English, particularly in the area of tense and aspect. Mobaidin described this language transfer as a "complicated phenom-

enon" that can seriously affect the process of L2 learning. All in all, making interlingual errors is a common phenomenon on the way of L2 acquisition. The main question remaining, however, is "how to eliminate such errors and enhance the potentiality of effective L2 learning?" Section 7 will offer some suggestions and recommendations in this regard.

### ***Statement of the problem:***

Kuwait University students majoring in various fields of study make plenty of lexical errors in their academic writing assignments as a result of the ineffective teaching techniques in Kuwait state schools.

### ***6.4 Claim of the Research:***

Having examined the materials and methods used in the teaching of English at Kuwaiti state schools, the present researchers make the claim that such methods impede, to a great extent, the subjects' effective learning of English. Indeed, these methods invite learners to resort to their mother tongue and borrow whatever lexical parameters they need in order to express their ideas in English. In other words, the researchers' claim suggests that students at Kuwaiti state schools will make more interlingual errors than intralingual errors as a result of the ineffective teaching situation discussed in section 5.

### ***6.5 Data Analysis and Results:***

In order to justify the above claim, the two groups of students were questioned to find out whether their errors were interlingual (caused as a result of L1 interference), intralingual (caused as a result of their overgeneralization of L2 lexical items), or both interlingual and intralingual at the same time. The questions asked to every student were the following:

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) What do you mean by the word "the student's word used wrongly"?
- 3) Do you still think this is the right word that you should have used?

- 4) Do you know the English word that could best be used in this context?
- 5) Why do you think you made this error? (Arabic or English interference)
- 6) Is there another factor that made you make this error?
- 7) What kind of school did you go to, private or state?
- 8) What do you think of the English teaching situation in Kuwaiti schools (syllabi? Teachers, methods etc.)?
- 9) If you were to change this situation what would you do?
- 10) Do you have any final comments to make?

Having asked the subjects all the above questions, the researcher was able to identify the source of the errors. Out of 51 errors, 43 (84%) were classified as interlingual, 5 (9.8%) as intralingual and 3 (~ 6%) as both interlingual and intralingual. Statistical analysis (Z-test and Z-confidence interval) was used to test the significance of the above findings. The above claim was modified as follows:

$$H_o: p \leq 0.73$$

$$\text{vs} \\ H_a: p > 0.73$$

The null hypothesis claims that out of all lexical errors found, the proportion of interlingual errors was 73% against the alternative hypothesis which indicated that the proportion of interlingual errors was higher. However, the analysis revealed that the p-value of the z-test is 0.043, which supports the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, based on the present sample, it can be concluded that out of all the errors examined the proportion of the interlingual errors was greater than or equal to 73%. To support this conclusion, we supplement the analysis with 95% two-sided z-confidence interval (71.4%, 93%) and 5% one-sided z-confidence interval ( $p \geq 0.735$ ) for the proportion p.

### ***7) Suggestions and Recommendations:***

Having found that students at the university level in Kuwait tend to make a lot more interlingual errors than intralingual errors, the

researchers of the present study would like to offer the following suggestions and recommendations:

- I) The English language teaching techniques whereby vocabulary items are taught in bilingual word lists have to be discarded and replaced by more efficient techniques whereby students are encouraged to learn the unfamiliar words from the context in which they occur.
- II) The new teaching techniques should ensure that unfamiliar vocabulary items are systematically repeated in subsequent units, so that their semantic and grammatical profiles can be fully retained (see section 5.2 for the relative occurrence of new vocabulary items).
- III) The new teaching techniques should also consider the pedagogical dimension that too many unknown words in a given text are counterproductive. In other words, a text should contain sufficient familiar words that can provide students with ample context which can assist them in understanding the new lexical items presented.
- IV) An important principle that needs to be taken into consideration when selecting English teachers for employment at state schools in Kuwait is that apart from the academic qualifications which these teachers are required to have, they should have the professional and practical experience that enables them to teach the language with more efficient techniques.
- V) Teachers should be urged to encourage their students to learn the foreign language not as a school requirement that needs to be fulfilled, but rather as an important and interesting subject that they need to master in order to manage several of their everyday language communications.

## Appendix (1)

### *Discussion of Errors:*

#### *A) Interlingual Errors:*

- 1 - Paris is famous in fashion.  
Rather than the expression “famous for”, the student used the expression “famous in” which is a literal translation of the Arabic equivalent “mashhour bi”.
- 2 - Italy situated in the South of Europe.  
The two-word expression “is situated” is normally translated into a single word in Arabic “Yaqa ”.
- 3 - The two most delicious foods in Italy are pizza and spaghetti.  
Though used as an uncountable noun in English, the word “food” is considered countable in Arabic. Thus the Arabic word “at’ima”, literally ‘foods’ in English, is very common.
- 4 - Thames River is one of the tallest rivers in the world.  
In Arabic one word “tawil” is used to cover the meaning of both words “long” and “tall”
- 5 - The Quran landed on Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) there.  
The word “landed” is a literal translation of the Arabic word “nazala”; The student meant to say “The Quran was revealed to Mohammad (PBUH) there”.
- 6 - I arrived to Rome at 10 a.m.  
Arabic “Yasil” (English “arrive”) is normally followed by the Arabic preposition “ila” which means “to”.
- 7 - It remembers me a lot of my childhood.  
In Arabic The word “yuthakkir” (“remind” in English) and the word “yatathakkar” (“remember” in English) are closely related, both being derived from the Arabic word “thakara”. The student, therefore, confused both words and used “remembers” instead of “reminds”.
- 8 - Family relationships are effected because of T.V.

- The Arabic word “athar” is used to stand for both the verb “affect” and the noun “effect”. Unfortunately, Arab learners of English are not usually sensitized to this spelling difference, using the spelling “effect” instead of “affect” very often.
- 9 - We will look to the advantages of watching television.  
The student used the preposition “to” (“ila” in Arabic) because this is the preposition that is usually used in the same context in Arabic.
- 10 - It refers to the person to decide his own choice.  
The student used “it refers to the person” instead of “it is up to the person” because in Arabic the word “yarji” (“refer” in English) is used in this context to convey the same meaning.
- 11 - If the voice of television is too loud then he cannot hear anybody.  
The same word “Sawt” in Arabic is normally used to cover both words “voice” and “sound” in English. These two words are, therefore, often used interchangeably by Arab learners of English.
- 12 - People always give you many advices.  
The Arabic word “Nasiha” is considered countable in Arabic. Arab learners of English, therefore, see no reason why “advice”, among other words, cannot similarly be treated as such.
- 13 - Television programmes can increase your knowledge.  
The English word “increase” was used instead of, for example, “broaden”. The reason is that the equivalent verb of “increase” in Arabic “Yazid” is very often used in a similar context.
- 14 - You can listen to the last news.  
English “last” and “latest” are both covered by the single Arabic word “aakhir”, so no distinction is usually made between these two words by Arab learners of English.
- 15 - This program does not fit your age.  
Arabic “Yunasib” is normally used to cover both “fit” and “suit” in English.
- 16 - Parents should censor what their children are watching.

“Censor”, “control”, “watch” and “supervise” can all be covered by the single Arabic verb “yuraqib”. Arab learners of English can, accordingly, use all these verbs interchangeably.

- 17 - In France, I would like to see many traces and monuments.  
The student used the word “traces” to mean “ruins”. The reason is that both words are translated into a single word (“aathaar”) in Arabic.
- 18 - I like France too much.  
“Too much” is used instead of “a lot”. In English, “too” in an expression such as “too much” has negative connotations which are not usually carried by the equivalent Arabic word “Kathiran”. Such a word has neutral connotations in Arabic, and is normally used to cover the four English expressions “too much”, “very much”, “so much” and “a lot”.
- 19 - Most people go back to college to compensate what they had missed when they were younger.  
Arabic “YuawiD” is not necessarily used with a preposition in Arabic. English “compensate”, however, is used with the preposition “for”. This is why the student used no preposition.
- 20 - Not many people can stand the university fees. The student, in this example, used “stand” instead of “afford”. The reason is that the Arabic word “yatahammal” is used in two different contexts to cover the meanings of both these words.
- 21 - They tend to start work in early age.  
The preposition “in”, in this example, is looked at as a lexical rather than a grammatical item. In a context similar to the above, the Arabic preposition “fi” (English “in”) is normally used.
- 22 - Television considered the most important invention  
It is hard for some Arab learners of English to accept that a verb in English can consist of two parts or more. For example, this student used the past participle “considered” alone with no form of verb to be preceding it. In Arabic, verbs usually come in single forms.

- 23 - Television transports scenes of violence.  
The student, in this example, used “transports” instead of “transmits” or rather “presents”. In Arabic, one verb is used (“yanqul”) to cover all verbs whose meanings involve some kind of movement being made. For example, “transfer”, “transmit”, “transport”, “move” etc. are all covered by the mentioned Arabic verb irrespective of the context in which they occur.
- 24 - There are violent movies that affect on the human in general and the children in special.  
The preposition “on” is used with “affect” in this example. In Arabic “aththara”, the equivalent verb of “affect” in English, is usually accompanied by a preposition meaning “on”. The student, therefore, was involved in the literal translation of the word and the preposition it is normally used with in Arabic.
- 25 - This can participate in destroying the relationships between friends and members of a family.  
The student used “participate in destroying” instead of “contribute to the destruction of”. Verbs such as “participate”, “share”, “contribute” and “help” can all be covered by the single Arabic verb “shaaraka” in various contexts, hence the use of “participate” instead of “contribute” in this example.
- 26 - Every family member has a T.V. in his room; this will help break the relationships between them.  
The student, in this example, used “help break” instead of “contribute to the breakdown of” for the same reason mentioned in the previous example. “Help” in English usually has favorable connotations. In other words, “help” and “break relationships” do not usually collocate.
- 27 - Everybody should work hard to defend about his opinion.  
Arabic “Yudafi” (English “defend”) is usually followed by “ann” which is a preposition equivalent to “about” in English. Since the Arabic verb is used with a preposition, the student in this example assumed that its English counterpart is also used with a preposition, hence the mistake.

- 28 - I am sure if you visit Australia you will not regret on that trip “ya’saf”, the Arabic equivalent of “regret” takes the preposition “alaa” (English “on”) in Arabic. This is why the student used “on” after verb “regret”.
- 29 - This is not a personality problem; it is a public problem in my hometown.  
In Arabic, the same word “shakhSiyya” can be used both as a noun and as an adjective, hence the students use of the noun “personality” instead of the adjective “personal”.
- 30 - In Mecca you can feel very safety any time of the day.  
In Arabic, “yash’ur”, the equivalent verb of “feel”, is usually followed by a noun rather than an adjective. To “feel safe” is translated into Arabic as “yash’ur bil’amaan”. For this reason, the student used “safety” instead of “safe”.
- 31 - You feel as if you were near from God.  
“Near from” is the literal translation of the Arabic expression “qaribun min”. In other words, the Arabic preposition “min” (English “from”) normally follows the Arabic adjective “qaribun” (English “near”).
- 32 - In Kuwait, if you sit under the sun you will melt like an ice cube.  
In Arabic people are said to sit “under” the sun rather than “in” the sun. The student, here again, seems to be translating literally the equivalent Arabic expression “yajlus tahta ashshams”.
- 33 - Kuwait has many economical relations with other countries.  
The student here used the adjective “economical” instead of “economic” due to the fact that both of these adjectives are covered by one single adjective in Arabic “iqtiSadi”.
- 34 - This event learnt me many lessons.  
In this example, verb “learn” was used instead of “teach”. This is because both are derived from the same verb “alima” in Arabic. Arab learners of English quite often confuse these two verbs.
- 35 - They watch television instead of doing their homeworks.  
The Arabic word equivalent to “homework” is treated as countable in Arabic (“waajib”/singular-“wajibaat”/plural). By

analogy, the student, in this example, also treated “homework” as such.

- 36 - Land prices in Kuwait have raised.  
The real reason for the students use of “raised” instead of “risen” is that in Arabic both verbs are derived from one single verb “rafaa”. In spite of his awareness of the existence of those two verbs in English, the student claimed that because Arabic uses one verb “rafaa”, he did not think that there could be any difference in use between verb “raise” and verb “rise”.
- 37 - Sometimes I hear some music in my free time.  
Many Arab learners of English do not seem to realize the difference between “hear” and “listen”, using them interchangeably in the same context. The reason is that both of these verbs can be covered by one single verb in Arabic, namely “yasma”.
- 38 - You can obtain a lot of informations on certain diseases by watching television.  
While “information” is used as uncountable in English, its Arabic counterpart, “maloumaat” is treated as countable. Arab learners of English, therefore, make this mistake quite often.
- 39 - It makes them get frightened and see bad dreams.  
“See” and “dream” do not normally collocate in English, but they do in Arabic. In English, a person is said to “have” rather than “see” a dream. In this sentence, the student transferred the Arabic collocation into English.
- 40 - For some people the price of the television is very expensive.  
While in English “prices” are not usually modified as “expensive”, they are in Arabic. The student, in this example, literally translated the equivalent Arabic expression into English.
- 41 - Many people are addicted on watching television.  
While in Arabic a person is said to be “addicted on something”, in English a person is said to be “addicted to something”. The student clearly borrowed his use of “on” from Arabic.
- 42 - T.V. is used to collect the family around it.  
“Collect” and “gather” are both covered by the same Arabic

word “yajma”. The students use of “collect” instead of “gather” shows his inability to perceive the difference in use between these two words.

- 43 - Going outside is a great adventure for people.  
The student used "outside" instead of "abroad". In informal Arabic the word "barra", literally translated into English as "outside", is usually used in a similar context to the above.

***B) Intralingual Errors:***

- 44 - It can affect our health, practically the eyes.  
This is a similar example to the above. The student confused “practically” with “particularly”, both being phonetically similar.
- 45 - Television is a good mean of spreading knowledge and culture.  
The student used the word “mean” instead of “means”. He overgeneralized the English rule whereby an “s” is normally added to the noun to make it plural. Drawing on this rule, he assumed that “means” is the “plural of “mean”.
- 46 - Watching T.V. should not stop students working hardly.  
In this sentence the student used the adverb “hardly” instead of “hard”. He made this mistake as a result of overgeneralizing the English rule which states that adverbs are made by the addition of “ly” to adjectives.
- 47 - Many childrens watch T.V. most of the day.  
“Childrens” is used instead of “children” in this sentence. The student added an “s” to the word “children” failing to realize that the word “children” is plural in itself.
- 48 - T.V. has teached people a lot about other cultures.  
The student used “teached” instead of “taught” as a result of overgeneralizing the English rule of adding “ed” to form the past and past participle of regular verbs. The student, thus, treated “teach” as a regular verb.

***Single Errors Classified as both Interlingual and Intralingual:***

- 49 - Beside Paris, there are many other interesting places to visit.  
This mistake is both interlingual and intralingual. It is interlingual because in Arabic both words “beside” and “besides” can be covered by one single word “bijaaneb”. It is also interlingual because in English the two words “beside” and “besides” are formally similar. For these two reasons, the student confused these two lexical forms.
- 50 - Television is just a means in the handles of others.  
This mistake is again both interlingual and intralingual. Interlingually, both "hands" and "handles" are in many contexts covered by the same Arabic word "yad". Intralingually, the student was confused between the two phonetically-similar words “hands” and “handles”.
- 51 - Children watch many violent scenes including those of died people.  
The student here confused “died” with “dead” because of the phonetic similarity between them, which makes the mistake intralingual. However, the mistake is also interlingual as the two Arabic words "maata" and "mayyet", respectively corresponding to the above words, are also confusing in view of their similar phonetic forms in Arabic.

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## Appendix II

- 1) The researchers interviewed some teachers and head teachers of English at some state schools in Kuwait and were provided with some information confirming the situation of teaching English at their schools. Below are the names of these schools together with the positions, names and nationalities of the English teaching staff working there:

### *Fariaa Bint Abi Assalt Secondary School*

Position	Name	Nationality
Principal	Hanaa Al-Sulaimi	Kuwaiti
Head Teacher	Lubna Ismail	Kuwaiti
Teacher	Ghada Mustafa Rabi'	Egyptian
Teacher	Suzan Muhammad Hani	Syrian
Teacher	Hamida Al-Attar	Kuwaiti

### *Kortuba Secondary School*

Position	Name	Nationality
Principal	Maha Al-Aiban	Kuwaiti
Head Teacher	Salwa Abdulghani	Egyptian
Teacher	Nitto Nino	Indian
Teacher	Safia Habib	Kuwaiti
Teacher	Munira Al-Shatti	Kuwaiti
Teacher	Amira Al-Kattan	Kuwaiti
Teacher	Abeer Lutfi Muharram	Egyptian

*Sharifa Al-Awadi Secondary School*

Position	Name	Nationality
Principal	Nadia Al-Saeed	Kuwaiti
Head Teacher	Amna Al-Hasan	Kuwaiti
Teacher	Suhair Abdulazim	Egyptian
Teacher	Salha Al-Qulaih	Syrian
Teacher	Rabi'a Al-Husainan	Kuwaiti

- 2) This students' attitude to learning English was also confirmed by the teachers mentioned above.
- 3) This case was reiterated by the head teachers referred to in Note 1. Ideally, they hope that this prescribed teaching material will be changed by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education on the earliest possible occasion. Currently, they are offering their teachers good guidance on the most effective methods of teaching English, but the teachers feel they are constrained by the teaching material prescribed by the mentioned ministry itself.
- 4) Students' fields of study include English literature, architecture, electrical engineering, education, biology, administrative sciences etc.