

The Syntax-Pragmatics Interface in L2: Aspects of Information Structure
Teaching and Learning in a Saudi ESL Context

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Abstract

Despite advancements in teaching English as a second language (ESL) in Saudi Arabia, Saudi ESL learners' language, even at advanced levels, deviates from that of native English speakers. While these ESL learners can often generate well-formed sentences, their output may not be fully comprehensible in context, as they often fail to package information appropriately or deviate significantly from native norms. While there are many reasons due to which contextual organisation of information can be problematic for second language (L2) learners, this thesis sheds light on the Syntax-Information Structure interface (i.e., the mapping of information structure categories and the various syntactic constructions that realise those categories) as a barrier in L2 acquisition and it explores the effect of explicit and implicit teaching in overcoming such shortfalls in an ESL Saudi context.

The study strengthens the assumption that grammatical competence and pragmatic competence do not necessarily co-develop. Although some factors such as first language (L1) influence, typological universals and markedness can affect use of L2 pragmalinguistic structures (information structure), this study provides evidence that Saudi learners can acquire these structures through awareness. The findings highlight that teaching can play a major role in promoting learners' awareness of the pragmalinguistic structures of a second language. While such awareness leads to stable knowledge, however, it is not without shortcomings, as it can give rise to overproduction.

Keywords

Information structure, syntax, pragmatics, second language learning

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Over the past decades in second language acquisition (SLA)¹ studies, there has been increasing interest in different levels (early and advanced stages) of language acquisition, particularly in relation to near-native proficiency or the successful acquisition of a second language (L2). Nevertheless, few studies have compared the early stages and the advanced stages of the learning process. Furthermore, although L2 teachers' main goal in many countries is for advanced learners to communicate like native speakers in the target language, the definition of native-like competence is generally left unclear what native-like competence particularly means (De-Haan, 1997, p. 55).

Despite growing interest in second language proficiency (L2P), the field is still struggling with terms such as 'nativeness' and 'advanced learners', particularly when it comes to learners' acquisition of a language linguistic subsystems. Most L2 learners have mastered ESL rules and principles, and their spoken and written production may be free from grammatical errors; nevertheless, their writings and conversations regularly sound unidiomatic (odd). ESL learners appear to have difficulties identifying accurate reasons behind this incompetence (non-nativeness), their issues are often discussed and framed within vague concepts, i.e., 'style' or 'unidiomaticity' (Callies, 2008).

¹ In this study, various abbreviations are used for clarity and brevity. For example, SLA indicates second language acquisition, L2 indicates the second language to which a person has not been exposed to from birth or within early childhood, ESL indicates English as a second language, and IS indicates the information structure that is the core of the study.

In the past 20 years, many studies in SLA have provided fundamental empirical evidence that spoken and written texts produced by L2 learners differ from those of native speakers in terms of the frequent use of certain phrases, words and syntactic structures². In a current overview of the field, Granger (2004, p. 135) identifies interlanguage (IL) as ‘the result of a very complicated interplay of factors: some shared by a lot of L2 learner populations, teaching-induced and transfer-related, and others more specific’. Granger (2004) argues, therefore, that typical characteristics of (IL) include overuse of superhigh-frequency vocabulary, avoidance of difficult structures and stylistic deficiencies that lead to produce ambiguous written and spoken texts.

There is evidence that the way L2 learners utilise linguistic structures to package information in discourse³, also known as information structure (IS), is another factor that differentiate them from native speakers. Chafe (1976) asserts that IS is not about the information itself but how the information is organised in discourse due to various communicative needs, such as correcting a misunderstanding, amending a communicative breakdown or attracting interlocutors’ attention, to make the information easier to understand. Consequently, learners who have commonly mastered L2 rules to a near-perfect degree have difficulties applying grammatical forms according to IS functions (von Stutterheim, 2003; Carroll et al., 2000). Previous research has shown that even proficient learners are likely to have difficulties with certain form-function mappings, such as those in fields in which pragmatics and syntax

² Hinkel (2002) gives a detailed analysis of ESL learners’ texts and English native speakers’ texts. Research on syntactic structures includes Boström Aronsson’s (2003) work on extraposition and clefted structures, Nesselhauf’s (2005) study on verb-noun collocations, Callies’s (2008a, 2008b) discussion of tough-movement, and Granger’s (1997) examination of participle clauses.

³ In this study, I use the term “discourse” to refer to communication of thoughts by words and the term “context” to refer to the group of facts or circumstances that surround a particular situation, event, etc.

interact; these learners lack awareness of the suitable use of pragmalinguistic structures both formally and informally in written and spoken discourse.

English offers several linguistic constructions that can be utilised to organise and emphasise information in discourse. The most common way to mark different items in discourse is through prosodic means (as illustrated in 1.1⁴).

(1.1) a. *Maria* likes the dates.

b. Maria *likes* the dates.

c. Maria likes the *dates*.

Depending on the stress, either ‘Maria’, ‘likes’ or ‘dates’ can be emphasised as the most essential information. Another common way is through lexico-grammatical constructions (e.g., the emphatic *do*, focusing modifiers like *only* and pragmatic markers such as *really*), as shown in (1.2).

(1.2) a. Maria *does* like the dates.

b. Maria *only* likes the dates.

c. Maria *really* likes the dates.

Aside from prosodic and lexico-grammatical devices, word order patterns and more complex syntactic means that, differ from the canonical subject-verb-object (SVO) word order, are also necessary and are commonly utilised to structure and emphasise information in written and spoken discourse. If the speaker wants to stress Maria particularly liked the Arabic coffee while

⁴ Italic style is used to show focal stress in examples (1.1).

in Saudi Arabia, there are many syntactic means that can be used to achieve this goal, depending on the discourse. Word order patterns that diverge from the canonical word orders (SVO) in the target language (as exemplified in 1.3⁵ to 1.7⁶) are highly interesting. They can be seen as discourse-motivated variations of the normal word order in (1.3).

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------|
| (1.3) | Maria liked the Arabic coffee. | basic word orders (SVO) |
| (1.4) | It was <u>the Arabic coffee</u> that she liked. | it- clefts |
| (1.5) | What she liked was <u>the Arabic coffee</u> . | wh- clefts |
| (1.6) | <u>The Arabic coffee</u> was what she liked. | reverse wh-clefts |
| (1.7) | <u>The Arabic coffee</u> she liked. | preposing |

The syntactic constructions used to achieve information structure are particularly useful in writing where information cannot be emphasised by prosodic constructions and these syntactic constructions are the focus of this study.

Interestingly, native speakers do not randomly utilise these particular syntactic constructions. They select from various alternatives to serve their communicative intentions in discourse. For example, they use it-clefts to correct misunderstanding and a pseudo or wh- cleft to highlight new information at the end of discourse (see chapter two of this study). Hence, the study of syntactic constructions is important because it would raise L2 learners' awareness about information structure and its pragmatic functions⁷ in discourse, which would help them

⁵ The examples utilised in this research are authentic and have been brought out from text corpora of Arabic and British English or have been gathered from Saudi and British magazines and newspapers. Some examples that have been taken from text corpora and magazines/newspapers can be found in the reference part of this thesis. Other examples for which no references are provided have been constructed for explanation.

⁶ Underling is used to mark emphasised information from example 1.4 to 1.7.

⁷ In this study, the term "pragmatic function" or "pragmatic meaning" of IS and the term "pragmalinguistic functions" refer to the functions of IS categories such as correcting and attracting interlocutors' attention. The term "syntactic constructions" refers to the actual device used to achieve IS. The term "Pragmalinguistic structures" and "discourse pragmatics" are synonym refer to IS categories and their functions.

understand and communicate effectively in a target language. One of several possible factors that makes students' writings and conversations regularly sound odd or differ from native speakers' writings and conversations is their lack of awareness of the suitable use of syntactic means in accordance with their functions in different contexts. The necessity for syntactic constructions used to encode IS are highlighted in Banks (1999), who mentions, the L2 learner 'must presume an IS, otherwise he/she would not be able to comprehend the text at all' (Banks, 1999, p. 6). This is also enhanced by Kuno's (1972) discussion that 'as there is no sentence without syntactic structure, there is no sentence without information structure' (ibid., p. 16). It is feasible to presume that IS is a term that exists in all human languages. Nevertheless, the way IS is encoded, and the explicit linguistic devices used to convey pragmatic meanings are language-specific and differ across different languages (Foley, 1994, p. 167). English and Arabic share some basic IS principles. For instance, both languages support the setting of [new] after [given] information in declarative sentences, see example (1.8) and (1.9).

(1.8) a. Where did [Given Maria go] yesterday? English
 [Given Maria went] [New to school].

(1.9) a. ayna [zahab-t Given Maria]? Arabic
 where went-3PS⁸ Maria
 Where did Maria go?

 b. [Given zahab-t Maria] [New ela almadrasah]. Arabic
 went-3PS Maria to school
 Maria went to school.

⁸ The abbreviation '3PS' refers to the third person pronouns in English such as she, he, it, her, his, hers, him and its.

Nevertheless, despite some functional and formal features that the two languages have in general, it will be illustrated in this study that there are essential differences in accordance with information structure of Arabic and English, and that each language has its own preferences for realising the pragmatic functions in discourse such as clarification and contradiction.

1.2 Statement of Problem

This study explores the use of pragmalinguistic structures among Arab learners of English in Saudi Arabia, university learners (educational zone) in particular. As an English trainer and later as an English lecturer in the English Language and Literature Department at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia, I have noticed that both ESL teachers and L2 learners express concerns about the incomprehensibility and inaccuracy of their language use. More specifically, I have taught varying levels of English at the university, from beginner to advanced, and have noticed that although students are studying at an advanced university level, their outcomes in writing are similar to those of novice students, with their writing regularly seeming odd and incomprehensible. In addition, there is a noticeable difference between advanced language learners' writing and native speakers' writing. This problem applies to non-native speakers of English in many countries (Callies, 2009). For example, German learners of English prefer to use canonical word orders in their writing productions (Plag, 1994; Leube, 2000), Dutch learners of French avoid using syntactic means to achieve IS of the target language (Sleeman, 2004) and Swedish learners of English are not entirely aware of thematic meaning when writing in the target language (Boström Aronsson, 2003). Hence, this problem is not specific to students at universities in Saudi Arabia or Arabic speakers in general (see 3.2 of this study).

The six ESL teachers interviewed in this study stated that students still have difficulties in acquiring English skills⁹, particularly in writing. Students at advanced stages still produce odd sentences even after they have mastered most of the grammar, have a solid vocabulary and have been taught English since primary school. ESL teachers often feel that they are incapable of finding the reasons for this barrier to native-like fluency. They attribute these difficulties to the way of teaching grammars away from their functions in the ESL classrooms as well as the lack of information structure in ESL curricula. They stress that one of the possible factors that deters from learning English is the fact that ESL learners have no idea about how to use the forms and their functions in discourse. According to the teachers, L2 learners need to know how to package information in accordance with the IS principles of the target language to overcome this challenge. The teachers interviewed in this study agree that discourse pragmatics are one of the fundamentals of language acquisition. Unfortunately, there are no studies investigating how ESL learners regard the syntax-IS interface in a Saudi context, how different information structure categories are realised when using English. The under-representation of these structures in ESL curricula has encouraged me to investigate this barrier that faces ESL students when learning the target language aiming to find useful solutions to cope with it.

1.3 Justification and Scope of the Study

L2 learners' competence in IS-related syntactic constructions in written discourse is an underinvestigated area in second language studies and poses a potential learning barrier for even expert students. Researchers have argued that syntactic means are essentially underrepresented in advanced L2 learners' production (Schachter, 1988). There is an explicit

⁹ The English skills are reading, listening, writing and speaking.

research gap in students' comprehension and use of these syntactic structures in relation to their pragmatic discourse functions.

In general, studies often look at the relation between IS and syntax in Arabic (i.e., Moutoakil, 1989; Bolotin, 1995; Brustad, 2000; Holes, 2005; Edwards, 2010; Owen et al, 2010, 2013; Ingham, 2010) or the relation between Arabic IS and English IS (i.e., Khlil, 2000; Alzaidi, 2014); however, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first empirical study in a Saudi context.

This study focuses on learners' use of syntactic English constructions in their writings, where such constructions are particularly relevant. Most of the previous studies focused on prosodic constructions of IS such as intonation, stress and tone to emphasise information when speaking. Therefore, the prosodic constructions are not discussed, unless they are essential in connection with the other structures. Future research is needed in the use of the lexico-grammatical devices of IS and their pragmatic functions in written and spoken discourse, a major issue in second language acquisition studies.

This research has implications for pragmatics within second language acquisition. Pragmatics within SLA is normally pointed out as Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) and has mainly focused on issues of cross-cultural politeness by exploring L2 speakers' understanding and performance of a certain number of individual speech acts such as greetings, requests and apologies. As previously mentioned, the use of syntactic constructions is pragmatically motivated, relating to pragmatic competence in a language. Therefore, I argue that pragmatic competence in a second language involves more than the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic ability to understand and use speech acts, and that the importance of pragmatic competence beyond speech acts has been neglected in L2 pragmatic research to date. Current approaches (see Mauranen, 1996; Callies,

2009) have explored the organisation of written text in terms of different communicative needs; these investigations are broadly anchored in a contrastive rhetoric frame.

This study is comparatively wide scope and is related to second language competence in pragmatics and syntax. I adopt explicit and implicit of teaching IS, arguing that noticing is an important first base in both the teaching and learning of IS (see Jessner, 2006, p. 34). These pedagogical approaches aim to raise students' awareness of how language works, particularly how the forms work together with their functions in discourse (Bolitho et al., 2003, p. 251). In addition, participating ESL teachers share their personal views on the importance of teaching the pragmlinguistic structures of the target language and the best methods for teaching these structures, so this gives more weight to the present study since it is supported by multiple experts in the field.

This research is a useful source of information for both SLA and linguistic theories. It could help L2 learners, particularly Arab learners, bridge the gap between their grammatical competence and pragmlinguistic competence, i.e., their perceived nativeness or non-nativeness. It could help in raise ESL teachers' awareness of the importance of teaching IS to successfully overcome challenges in acquiring ESL. ESL teachers who recognise English IS can help L2 learners to acquire English IS functions more easily than teachers who are unaware of the language's IS. They will be able to introduce appropriate language materials to their classrooms to help learners practice the pragmlinguistic structures of the target language in discourse so that they can later use them successfully in their spoken or written discourse. In essence, integrating IS functions into ESL curricula would facilitate the acquisition of difficult linguistic characteristics L2 learners face.

1.4 Research Questions and Aims

Research Q1: How do Arabic and English realise information structure (IS)? What are the similarities and differences in IS between both languages?

Research Q2: How do Saudi ESL learners perform regarding their realisation of English IS compared to native English speakers? Is there any correlation between pragmalinguistic competence and grammatical competence?

Research Q3: What effect can the use of implicit and explicit instructions have on L2 learners' acquisition of IS? Are there any differences between the learners at early and advanced stages before and after they are taught IS?

Research Q4: Will the teaching and acquisition of pragmalinguistic knowledge result in stable knowledge?

Research Q5: What is the current situation regarding IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia?

The aim of this study is to explore the acquisition of English IS by Saudi L2 learners. The study intends to examine the use of the syntactic constructions through which IS is achieved and the teaching of these constructions in second language learning.

The objectives of this study are, first, to explore the structural similarities and dissimilarities of IS, namely 'focus and 'topic' in Arabic and English. Comparing the structures of both languages (contrastive analysis) would help researchers discover the barriers L2 learners face when trying to acquire a second language, particularly the syntactic constructions used to achieve IS.

Second, in relation to SLA theory, this research strives to examine the relation of pragmalinguistic and grammatical abilities in the target language and the impact of the IS principles of the first language (Arabic) on the acquisition of the second language (English).

Third, this research intends to explore whether teaching is effective in helping L2 students acquire knowledge of IS and whether teaching is an effective method for helping L2 students retain this knowledge over time.

At last, this research attempts to improve the learning experience to help L2 learners acquire English more effectively. Comparing the structure between the languages and exploring IS teaching in ESL classrooms in Saudi Arabia may help L2 learners and ESL teachers further understand the complexities of second language acquisition and may motivate L2 writers and L2 speakers to organise information in discourse appropriately.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The study is structured as follows: Chapter two begins with a discussion of how IS relates to linguistic pragmatics, followed by an explanation of the structural characteristics and pragmatic functions of selected English syntactic constructions, including a concise study of the relevant literature. The second part of Chapter two discusses the IS functions in Arabic grammar, followed by a contrastive analysis of IS principles in English and Arabic, that focuses on which syntactic means are preferred and available in the two languages and how basic word orders affects IS in both languages.

Chapter three introduces pragmatics within second language acquisition, including a comprehensive review of previous studies on pragmalinguistic structures in L2 studies. The

second portion of the chapter presents a comparison of two main approaches (universal grammar and the functional-typological approach) that employ typological universals to illustrate second language acquisition phenomena; demonstrates how an integration of cross-linguistic influence and typological markedness can be used to make predictions as to the problem of syntactic characteristics in the process of acquisition; and shows how teaching and learning materials facilitate acquiring these difficult syntactic characteristics, i.e., the pragmalinguistic structures of the L2. From the contrastive studies between Arabic and English in Chapter two, together with an understanding of crosslinguistic influence and typological markedness in Chapter three, the empirical study becomes clearer, in terms of the primary data to be collected and analysed.

Chapter four describes the procedures and methods for data gathering and interpretation. The study employs a mixed-methods design. The first research question is answered bibliographically. The second, third and fourth research questions are answered quantitatively through pre-tests and post-tests with L2 learners, examining their performance when ESL teachers integrate IS into their teaching. The fifth research question and all the research questions which are answered quantitatively are also answered qualitatively through in-depth interviews with ESL teachers and the examination of the research's and the teachers' reflexive journals, which were used to gain their feedback on observed differences between including and excluding IS in their ESL classes. This, combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Chapter five presents the data interpretation and discusses the findings of the mixed-methods design. Chapter six gives a summary and explanation of the fundamental research results in light of the basic study questions. It also outlines the limitations of the research and makes some suggestions for future studies.

Chapter Two: An Overview of Information Structure

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents several essential IS terms and establishes how the study of IS links with linguistic pragmatics. Since the study of IS is both complex and diverse, it is important to define the basic terminology and concepts used in the empirical exploration.

First, this chapter outlines the main dimensions of IS (the form, context and the mental states of interlocutors). Then, it presents different categories of IS (i.e., Focus, Given and Topic) and focuses on the selected syntactic constructions in English, including a concise study of the relevant literature. Finally, it presents a preview of IS functions in Arabic as discussed in the literature and demonstrates a contrastive analysis of IS principles in English and Arabic.

Since this study focuses on an exploration of the use of English IS by L2 Saudi learners, the discussion and demonstration of present studies about the basic IS notions and syntactic means used to achieve IS are selective and concise; it is not the purpose of this study to give an extensive overview of the complex terminologies and models of IS. For such details, the reader can see von Heusinger (1999), Gómez González (2001) or Hetland and Molnár (2001).

The conceptual and terminological ambiguity and overlap in information structure studies reflect its study from various perspectives as well as restraints and controversies regarding the position and status it should have in syntax. It is these features that make it useless to discuss and do full justice to the various paths to information structure in this study. However, it is important to operationalise the categories of information structure like Focus and Topic due to the empirical nature of this research, and this will be presented in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.3. In addition, the demand for such operationalisation stems from the fact that this study focuses on

a pragmalinguistic interpretation of learners' language: the interlanguage produced by L2 students.

It seems that this operationalisation causes a contradiction between insights achieved from more theoretical studies and the implementation of these insights into empirical research. While hindrances of implementing the findings of theoretical work into empirical studies are common, there are two elements that are important in the current situation. First, there is a wide gap in the literature between theoretical approaches to information structure terms that include few practical interpretations and descriptive accounts that investigate a certain information structure phenomenon in one language or examine many of phenomena within one or several languages. This may be because the conceptual and terminological ambiguity and overlap in IS can make it quite difficult and complex to apply to empirical analyses (Hetland and Molnár, 2001).

Further important, however, is the second element; although IS is widely understood in linguistics, its position in human cognition and language is still rarely recognised. It appears to be unclear whether IS categories such as Focus and Topic are linguistic terms or whether they are elements of human cognition interacting with language. It appears that information structure cannot be fully captured by linguistics alone, as it is at least partially anchored in human cognition (Callies, 2009). Consequently, linguistic research of information structure needs to be integrated with interdisciplinary and applied linguistic studies to test hypotheses concerning information structure as an important element in language production.

2.2 Major Notions of ‘Information Structure’

IS refers to the complex interaction between various principles and phenomena that organise information in discourse. The concept was first defined by Halliday¹⁰ (1967; see von Heusinger, 1999, p. 101), and many subsequent definitions have since been offered. One of the most effective functional approaches has been the model introduced by Halliday (1967); characterised by the key terms of ‘communicative dynamism’ and ‘functional perspective of sentence’ (Halliday, 1967, cited in Firbas, 1971). These two concepts refer to the forms in which information is structured according to the context, not to the actual information conveyed in discourse.

An alternative term, ‘information packaging’, was coined by Chafe (1976) in reference to how a speaker/writer is able to express what he/she is saying or writing in a particular context. Interestingly, packaging in Chafe’s (1976) view is how the message is sent, ‘just as the packaging of toothpaste can affect sales in partial independence of the quality of the toothpaste’ (ibid., p. 27-28), as illustrated in (2.1).

(2.1) a. Maria peeled the banana.

b. The banana was peeled by Maria.

c. The banana Maria peeled.

This example shows that packaging refers to different ways a message can be sent and structured depending on the context. Surprisingly, each sentence in the example above uses a different syntactic structure (i.e., passive in 2.1b and preposing in 2.1a, which will be further

¹⁰ A linguist, Halliday was part of the Prague school of linguistics, which was most active during the 1920s and 1930s. He focused on the function of constituents within language (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015).

discussed below) to refer to pragmatic functions. Chafe (1976) states, ‘I have been using the term packaging to refer to the use of syntactic means to serve communicative needs’ (ibid., p. 28), for example, correcting a misunderstanding, amending a communicative breakdown, or attracting the interlocutors’ attention to make a task easier to understand (Callies, 2009; Miller, 2006).

In response to Halliday (1967) and Chafe (1976), information packaging is now generally used (see Birner and Gregory, 1998; Huddleston, 2002; Callies, 2009; Alzaidi, 2014) to determine ‘a structuring of sentences by prosodic, syntactic devices that arises from the demand to serve communicative needs of a certain discourse’ (Vallduví and Engdahl, 1996, p. 460), as illustrated in (2.2).

(2.2) a. Maria ate an orange.

b. Maria ate **an orange**. Marking the sentence phonologically

c. Maria **does** eat an orange. Marking the sentence lexically and phonologically

d. **An orange** Maria ate. Marking the sentence syntactically and phonologically

The sentence /Maria ate an orange/ can be displayed in various ways. All three sentences convey the same propositional meaning: a female named Maria ate an orange. They only differ from each other in relation to IS.

More specifically, Lambrecht (1994, p. 1) proposes a model to describe IS. He argues that

‘IS is the interrelationship between the mental states of interlocutors (speakers and hearers) and linguistic form in a particular context and that the linguist dealing with IS must deal simultaneously with communicative and formal aspects of language’ (as shown in Figure 2.1).

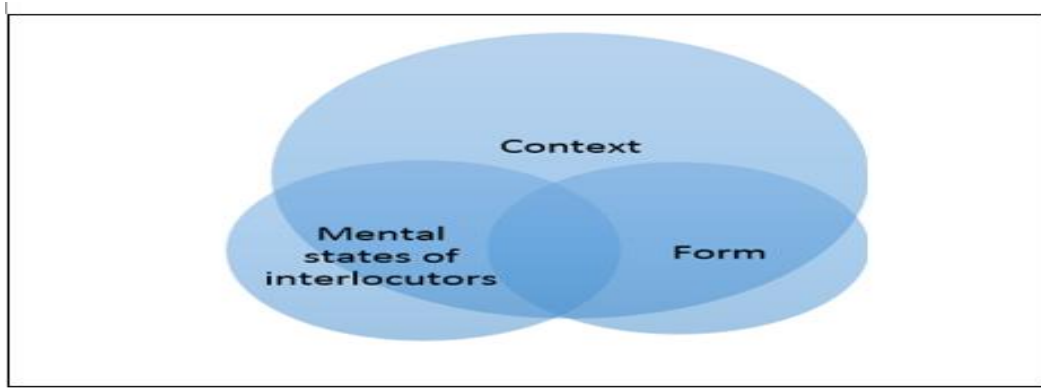


Figure 2.1: Lambrecht's (1994) IS model.

In Lambrecht's (1994) model, IS is described as the mental state of the speaker/writer and listener/reader, both of which affect the organisation of the sentence structure according to the context; the context and the form together serve pragmatic functions (see Figure 2.2).

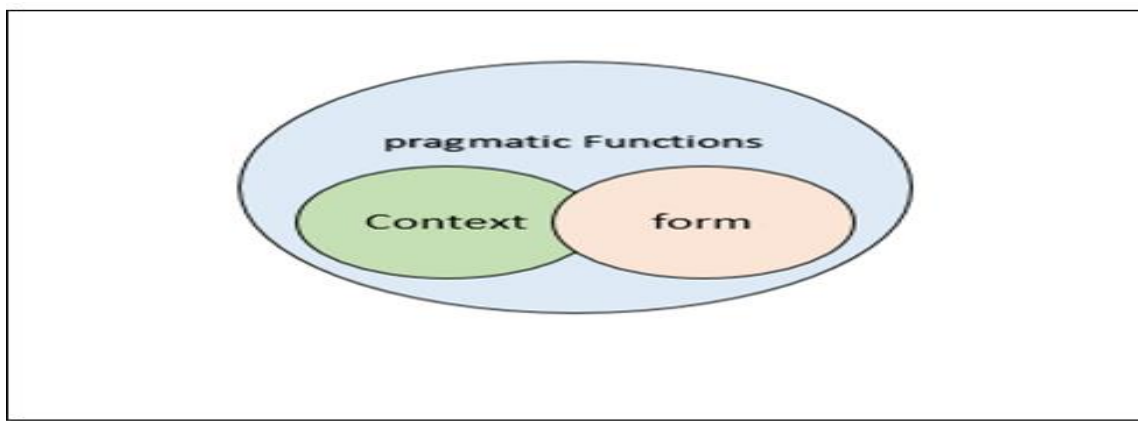


Figure 2.2: Context and form as pragmatic functions.

As a result, another term that is commonly used to describe IS is 'discourse pragmatics', which indicates the relationship between IS and linguistic pragmatics. Lambrecht (1994) offers the following explanation:

'Since discourse includes the use of sentences in communicative settings, such research is clearly associated with the general area of pragmatics. The general domain of inquiry into the relation between discourse and grammar is therefore often referred to as 'discourse pragmatics.' (ibid., p. 2)

Lambrecht (1994) also states that ‘the information structure of a sentence is the formal expression of the pragmatic structuring of a proposition in a discourse’ (ibid., p. 2). In essence, he is arguing that particular characteristics of sentences cannot be entirely comprehended without looking at the contextual discourse, which is why grammar and discourse are frequently identified as ‘discourse pragmatics’.

Furthermore, Lambrecht (1994) differentiates between two types of pragmatics: conversational pragmatics and discourse pragmatics. He states the following:

‘While conversational pragmatics is concerned with the question of why one and the same sentence form may express two or more meanings, discourse pragmatics is concerned with the question of why one and the same meaning may be expressed by two or more sentence forms.’ (ibid., p. 5)

Similar to Chafe, Lambrecht (1994) clarifies that IS is ‘concentrated on the comparison of propositionally equivalent, however, pragmatically and grammatically different sentence pairs’ (ibid., p. 5). While certain syntactic means such as ‘it-clefts’ or ‘wh-clefts’¹¹ might have the same semantic content, they obviously diverge in the way they highlight this semantic content, as exemplified in (2.3).

(2.3)

- a. A boy found my ball at the park.
- b. It was a boy that found my ball at the park. [not a girl]
- c. Who found my ball at the park was a boy. [not a man]

These sentences convey different pragmatic functions and differ in pragmatic meaning. The

¹¹The syntactic devices used to achieve IS will be discussed in further details in 2.3.1.4.

sentences in (2.3) each make a statement about a person (a boy) who found an item (my ball) at a specific location (at the park). Sentences (2.3b) and (2.3c) could contain a further contrastive presupposition that is not explicitly indicated but can be contextually extracted, i.e., neither a man nor a girl found my ball.

It should be noted here that first language speakers do not utilise these particular syntactic constructions randomly. They often select from various alternatives to meet their contextual communicative demands and therefore often utilise these means to express their pragmatic intentions (Callies, 2009), including correcting or confirming previously discussed information.

In sum, although linguists use different terms to reference and discuss IS in the literature, including ‘information structure’ (Halliday, 1967), ‘information packaging’ (Chafe, 1976) and ‘discourse pragmatics’ by (Vallduví, 1996; Lambrecht, 1994), they agree that there are three important characteristics about IS: 1) IS is not concerned with the proposition of a sentence but with the way that the content is delivered; 2) the characteristics of sentences can only be sufficiently illustrated by taking into consideration the forms and contexts in which sentences are embedded; and 3) the presence of particular structures and pragmatic aspects of IS, which will be discussed later.

2.3 Information Structure Categories

As previously discussed, twentieth-century scholars do not use a single specific term in relation to IS and still have not come to a consensus on IS categories. Different scholars have used different names and dichotomies, for example, ‘theme-rheme’ dichotomy (Halliday, 1970;

Matthiessen, 2004)¹², ‘background-focus’ (Dahal, 1947; Gundle, 1974; Chafe, 1976; Kuno, 1980), ‘presupposition-focus’ dichotomy (Chomsky and Jackendoff, 1972), ‘ground-focus’ (Vallduví, 1993) and ‘presupposition-assertion’ (Lambrecht, 1994). The commonality between all these different IS categories, however, is that the utterance or sentence can be broken down into two parts. The first part consists of Given (known) information (i.e., Theme, Topic, Ground or Presupposition) and is recoverable from the context. The second part contains New (unknown) information to the context and is not recoverable from the context (the Rheme, Focus, Assertion or Comment). This can be seen in examples (2.4)¹³ and (2.5).

(2.4) a. Where did you go yesterday?

b. [_{Given} I went] [_{Focus} to the cinema].

(2.5) a. When did you wake up today?

b. [_{Given} I woke up] [_{Focus} at 8:00 am].

In opposition to these IS categories, however, Prince (1981) disagrees with the strict ‘topic-comment’ or ‘old-new’ dichotomy and instead describes another model consisting of three elements to facilitate organising information in discourse (Birner and Ward, 1998, p. 14–16)¹⁴; as shown in (2.6) and Figure 2.3.

¹²Halliday adhered to the Prague school of linguistics’ view that separated the notions of ‘theme-rheme’ and ‘given-new’ in discourse. He states, ‘The Theme is what I, the speaker, choose to take as my point of departure. The Given is what you, the listener, already know about or have accessible to you. Given with New is listener-oriented, whereas Theme with Rheme is speaker-oriented’ (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, p. 39). Halliday’s framework is for English IS, so he does not expect it to be appropriate for all languages. Despite this, his English IS framework adds much profitable information to the literature, so his work has drawn little criticism (see Downing, 1991).

¹³This example is an insight that dates back to Lambrecht (1994, p. 209).

¹⁴For more details about Prince’s approaches to information structure, see Birner and Ward (1998).

(2.6)

(1) Discourse-new, hearer- new.

(2) Discourse-new, hearer- old.

(3) Discourse-old, hearer-old.

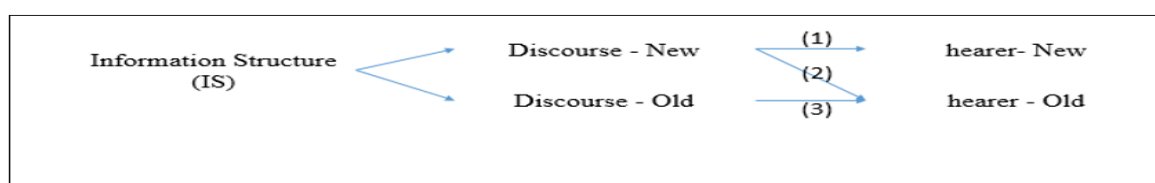


Figure 2.3: Prince's (1981) view of IS categories.

One striking example of Prince's (1981) view of IS categories is displayed in (2.7) below.

(2.7) Last week, Maria went to Saudi Arabia and she told me that she likes the dates there, which surprised me.

In this example, 'Saudi Arabia' and 'Maria' are new to the discourse, but they are considered hearer-old, because the listener can be expected to know about the country of Saudi Arabia and the person 'Maria'. The dates, however, presents discourse-new and hearer-new since the addressee had not previously heard about the dates there. In contrast, the anaphoric 'she' and 'there' represent discourse-old and hearer-old, as they have been previously mentioned in the sentence or discourse.

Lambrecht (1994) supports Prince's (1981) view and provides a similar approach to IS, but he offers further insight into IS categories. He discusses the two main IS categories (asserted information and presupposed information) and divides them into five subcategories. In essence,

Lambrecht (1994) distinguishes between two elements in discourse. First, he identifies the unidentifiable referent (or asserted information) which is ‘the proposition expressed by a sentence which the speaker does not expect the hearer to know or take for granted as a result of hearing the sentence uttered’ (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 52). This discourse element (the unidentifiable referent) is similar to Prince’s (1981a) term ‘discourse – new’, which is not stored in the reader/hearer’s mind, but Lambrecht (1994) further divided the asserted information into anchored and unanchored discourse – new items. An anchored discourse – new item appears in a syntactic combination of an indefinite noun and a definite phrase (a girl I play with), while unanchored discourse –new item appears in the form of an indefinite noun (a car, a truck) or zero articles.

Second, Lambrecht (1994) discusses the identifiable referent ‘given or presupposed information’ which is ‘the set of propositions lexicographically evoked in a sentence which the speaker expects the hearer is ready to take for granted or already knows at the time the sentence uttered’ (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 52) and which can be divided into three states: active, inactive and accessible. The active item refers to something mentioned earlier in context, so it can be expressed pronominally or lexically as Prince (1981) calls it ‘discourse-old and hearer-old’; if an inactive item is already stored in the listener/reader’s mind, Prince (1981) refers to it as ‘discourse-new and hearer-old’ (see example 2.7 above). Accessible referents are categorised as textually accessible, situationally accessible and inferentially accessible (as shown in Figure 2.4).

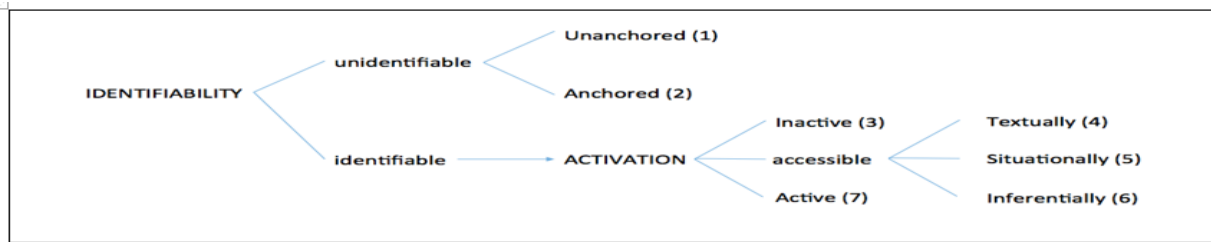


Figure 2.4: The information categories in relation to identifiable and unidentifiable discourse referents (adopted from Lambrecht (1994, p. 199).

All the terms that have been labeled in the diagram, are summarised in (2.8).

(2.8)

- (1) unidentifiable discourse – new unanchored
- (2) unidentifiable discourse – new anchored
- (3) inactive ‘discourse-new and hearer-old’
- (4) textually accessible
- (5) situationally accessible
- (6) inferentially accessible
- (7) active/given



The dialog in (2.9) demonstrates Lambrecht’s (1994) view of IS categories:

(2.9) Speaker A: I heard something good yesterday.

Speaker B: Oh, you got me hyped. What is it?

Speaker A: (Ø) Remember Maria, the girl we went jogging with (Ø)?

Speaker B: Oh, yeah.

Speaker A: Her best friend went to Disneyland.

Speaker B: Wow!

In the dialog (2.9), the underlined 'I', the pronoun 'we' and the first expression (\emptyset), which stands for the omitted 'do you', are 'active' constituents which could be understood from the text.

The second expression (\emptyset), which stands for the omitted 'her', is also an 'active' constituent as is implied through the previous mention of the noun, 'Maria'.

'Something good' is unidentifiable 'new' and unanchored, while 'Maria' and 'Disneyland' are 'inactive' (discourse-new, hearer-old). The time referent 'yesterday' is situationally accessible, and the noun phrase 'her best friend' is inferentially accessible because the possessive determiner 'her' links to the previous words 'Maria' and 'girl'.

The dialog in (2.9) has no examples of textually accessible referents. However, this would occur if, after talking about 'Maria's best friend' and 'Disneyland', speaker A shifted back to talk about Maria again (as in sentence 2.10):

(2.10) Maria is really happy.

'Maria' in the sentence above is textually accessible, which means speaker A cannot use the pronoun 'she' instead of the noun 'Maria', because the referent needs to be reactivated to avoid the listener or speaker misunderstanding.

It is clear from Lambrecht's (1994) definition of identifiable discourse that it is correlated to cognitive activation and mental state. One has to do with knowledge, while the unidentifiable discourse (asserted information) is outside the cognitive activation area, since activation requires a mental representation in the addressee's mind.

Similar to Prince's (1981) and Lambrecht's (1994) IS frames, Givon (2001) also distinguishes between identifiable entities (presupposed information), which have been previously stated in the discourse and are more predictable, and non-identifiable entities (asserted information) that are new, haven't been mentioned before in the discourse, and are thus less predictable (ibid., p. 22).

Cross-linguistically, information in the discourse usually follows the rules that Given information (i.e., shared world knowledge between speaker/writer and hearer/reader) comes before Focus. Focus comes at the end of a clause to give new information that is not predictable based on the preceding context. The appearance of new information at the end of a sentence is also common and is known as end-focus. As stated by Leech and Svartvik (1975),

‘the concept of end-focus postpones the most essential information so that the sentence finishes with a sort of climax ... This as a sentence is commonly more efficient . . . if the important point is saved up to the end.’ (ibid., p. 173–174)

Arnold et al. (2000, p. 34) support Leech and Svartvik's (1975) view and argue that a sentence becomes more understandable and is often more effective when not only the most important information, but also the long constituents in the sentence are located at the end of clause because they are more likely to consist of new rather than old information. They also argue that complex and long elements are placed at the end of a clause in all languages, such as English, otherwise a sentence may seem unbalanced and awkward¹⁵.

In psycholinguistics, the classification of information (Given before New) in the utterance helps the information proceed from the writer/speaker to the reader/hearer and makes discourse understandable. Clark (1977) mentions that the Given-New organisation of information displays an implicit agreement between the speaker/writer and hearer/reader in how

¹⁵ For further details about end-focus, see Chafe (1986, p. 26) and Callies (2009, p. 17).

information should appear in discourse. In English, new information frequently comes at the end of a sentence to show its prominence.

In addition to a general understanding of the functional principles of discourse organisation, it is also important to offer a deeper overview of IS categories such as Focus and Topic and their syntactic means, i.e., topicalisation, preposing and different kinds of clefts, as there is clear agreement about these syntactic constructions in literature.

2.3.1 Focus

Generally, the concept ‘Focus’ refers to the idea that one certain constituent is emphasised or presented as more important than other items in discourse without changing its propositional content (Miller, 2006; Chomsky, 1972; Chafe, 1976; Valld, 1993). Halliday (1967b) defines Focus as ‘new information that has not been formerly mentioned’ (ibid., p. 204). Lambrecht (1994) also describes Focus as ‘the portion of a proposition which cannot be taken for granted at the time of speech. It is the non-recoverable or pragmatically unpredictable constituent in discourse (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 207).

It is important to mention here that although the term ‘Focus’ has been defined in various ways (such as, the new or important information in discourse, as mentioned above), these definitions are insufficient for two reasons. First, in relation to the idea of ‘newness’, there are many conditions in which an element of Focus indicates something mentioned earlier (Féry, 2006). We could argue in (2.11) that ‘her’ is not new contextual information, as it has been mentioned before. In (2.12), we could also assume that what is new here is not ‘Maria’, but information on how Maria satisfies the description (x goes to the shop).

(2.11) Maria is a good girl and I love [_F her].

(2.12) a. Who goes to the shop, Sam or Maria?

b. [_F Maria] goes to the shop.

Second, the concept of importance is complicated to apply. In (2.13) below, which is more important in discourse: the speaker of the sentence or the one who got an A+ on the English exam?

(2.13) It was not [_F me] who got A⁺ on the English exam.

Hence, Féry (2007) claims that

‘the concept of emphasising is a specifically unclear one that is hardly predictive as long as we do not have a worked-out theory of what emphasising is. In several cases, the proposition applies to one alternative, but this does not imply that presupposition emphasising or newness of existence should be figured in the notion of Focus.’ (ibid., p. 17)

Since Focus is still vaguely defined in the literature, for this study, it is important to explain the different types of Focus according to its pragmatic uses.

Following Lambrecht’s (1994) view, there are two broad kinds of Focus: ‘information focus’ and ‘contrastive focus’. These two types are defined and illustrated with examples in the following two sections.

2.3.1.1 Information Focus

Information focus is ‘the semantic component of pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from presupposition . . . this Focus is what makes an utterance into assertion’ (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 213). This is exemplified in (2.14)¹⁶.

(2.14) a. How did Sam go to the shop?

b. Sam went to the shop [_{IF} by his car].

The proposition in (2.14) is ‘the thing that Sam goes by is his car’. Lambrecht (1994) breaks down the discourse in (2.14) into two parts: the pragmatic presupposition ‘Sam went to the shop by x’ and the pragmatic assertion ‘his car’. The difference between the proposition content and the presupposition is the focus expression ‘his car’, which has a pragmatic relationship to entire proposition /Sam went to the shop by his car/. ‘Its addition in proposition makes the utterance of the sentence a piece of new information’ (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 210), so the sentence stress is placed on this element /his car/.

More precisely, Lambrecht (1994) divides information focus into broad focus and narrow focus. The broad focus is sentence-focus structure, meaning the entire sentence or parts of the sentence within the focus domain. Equivalent concepts are ‘neutral description’ (Kuno, 1972, p. 298), ‘thetic structure’ (Sasse, 1987; Kuroda, 2005) and ‘out of the blue/all-new/all-focus’ structure (Féry, 2007). Examples demonstrating broad focus are given in (2.15) and (2.16), which correspond to Lambrecht’s example (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 233).

(2.15) a. What happened?

¹⁶ The abbreviation IF refers to ‘information focus’ and the abbreviation CF refers to ‘contrastive focus’ throughout the study.

b. [_{IF} My finger hurt].

(2.16) a. What are you building?

b. I am building [_{IF} a big giant castle using sticks].

Due to the broad question ‘What happened?’ in (2.15a), the sentence in (2.15b) appears to lack pragmatic presupposition and shows only pragmatic assertion. The entire sentence /My finger hurt/ is the focus domain. The example in (2.16b) also shows that parts of the sentence are included in the focus domain to answer the broad question ‘What are you building?’ in (2.16a).

Unlike broad focus, narrow focus (also called contrastive focus) highlights a single part of the sentence to show the contextual importance of one constituent among other alternatives. One good example of narrow focus is shown in (2.17) below.

(2.17) a. When are you going?

b. I am going at [_{IF} 11:00pm].

Consider the three examples from (2.15) to (2.17) above; one of the important pragmatic uses of both Foci (broad and narrow focus) is to obtain the right answer to a wh- question, which is known as ‘intensification’ (Paul, 1880). This intensification guides the direction in which further communication should develop. Thus, failing to choose the correct Focus normally leads to incoherent communication (Féry, 2006). Another important pragmatic use of narrow focus is to confirm or to correct information among other alternatives, as in (2.18) below.

(2.18) a. Susan made delicious cupcakes!

b. Yes, [_{IF} Susan] made delicious cupcakes.

b1. No, [_{IF} Maria] made delicious cupcakes!

In cases like (2.18b and 2.18b1), the narrow focus is implicitly determined so that only one meaning can be understood. This leads to a confirmative answer in the event of agreement, as in (b), and to a corrective answer in the event of disagreement, as in (b1).

It is important to mention that some linguists prefer to consider Focus that confirms or corrects information among other alternatives as a part of ‘information focus’ (see Sasse, 1987; Kuroda, 2005), whereas others (see Kiss, 1998; Féry, 2007) consider it a separate type of Focus. This will be discussed further in the next section.

2.3.1.2 Contrastive Focus

In line with previous studies (Kiss, 1998; Féry, 2007; Neeleman et al., 2009), contrastive focus, commonly referred to as ‘corrective focus’ or ‘identification focus’, is defined as information that implies a contrastive meaning with other information (as shown in 2.19 below).

(2.19) Speaker a: What do you want to eat, nuts or dates?

Speaker b: [_{CF} Dates] I want please.

In (2.19), the pragmatic use of contrastive focus is for confirmation. The element (dates) conveys a contrastive relationship with another element (nuts). The Speaker b in (2.19) uses a syntactic IF devices (which will be discussed further in 2.3.1.4) to confirm the alternative meaning expressed by Speaker a (2.19.a), and ‘I want nuts’ is rejected.

In linguistics, many researchers refuse to consider contrastive focus as an independent category of information structure, which varies from information focus (Bolinger, 1961; Gussenhoven, 1983a; Kiss, 1998, Lambrecht, 1994). For instance, Lambrecht (1994) asserts that contrastive focus is not entirely an item of grammar and it is, unlike information focus, ‘the result of the cognitive processes referred to as conversational implicature’ (ibid., 290-291). Nevertheless, other linguists argue that contrastive focus has prosodic and syntactic features; hence, it shapes an independent category of information structure in languages such as Arabic¹⁷ (Moutaoukel, 1989; Owens and Eligible, 2010), English (Chafe, 1976; Molnár, 2001), Hungarian, French (Kiss, 1998) and Russian (King, 1993) among others. In these languages, identification focus (contrastive focus) can be realised syntactically. For example, Kiss (1998) shows that, in Hungarian and French, information focus is recognised postverbally in syntax (see 2.20 a1, a2), whereas contrastive focus is recognised preverbally through cleft constructions; (see 2.20 b1, b2).

(2.20)

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| <p>a1. J’artam [_{IF} SPANYOLORSZÁG].
 I went Spain.to
 I went to [_{IF} Spain].</p> | <p>Hungarian</p> |
| <p>a2. Je suis allé en [_{IF} Espagne].
 I went to Spain
 I went to [_{IF} Spain].</p> | <p>French</p> |

¹⁷CF in Arabic will be discussed further in 2.4.2.1.2.

b1. [cf SPANYOLORSZÁG] J'artam. Hungarian

Spain.to I went

It was Spain where I went.

b2. [cf C'était l'Espagne] où je suis allé French

it was Spain where I went

It was Spain where I went.

(ibid., p. 250)

Now that we have further defined and established the two elements of Focus in the literature, the following section will offer a comparison between information focus and contrastive focus.

2.3.1.3 A Comparison between Information Focus and Contrastive Focus

Many definitions of information focus and contrastive focus have been discussed in the literature (i.e., Dressler et al., 1987; Givon, 1991; Dryer, 1995). What most definitions have in common is that while information focus serves to introduce new information, contrastive focus allows for additional meaning through the use of different syntactic constructions such as it-clefts and wh-clefts¹⁸ (as shown in 2.21):

(2.21) a. Maria ate [IF an orange].

b. It was [cf an orange] that Maria ate. (It-clefts)

¹⁸Focus constructions will be discussed further in 2.3.1.4.

c. What Maria ate was [cf an orange]. (Wh-clefts)

We can see here that examples (2.21b and 2.21c) make the same proposition as (2.21a) with one additional contextual implication: Maria ate an orange, not an apple or a banana.

Moreover, while information focus involves an open set of information¹⁹, contrastive focus must contain a closed set of alternatives, which should be explicitly mentioned or at least involved in discourse. Chafe (1976) argues that there are two major conditions with which contrastive focus must be identified: background knowledge of the context and a limited set of alternatives from which only one alternative is picked to the exclusion of the others (see conditions of preposing in 2.3.1.4.1). Therefore, contrastive focus is a complicated term, as it includes both structural and cognitive complexity and covers many different syntactic constructions (Dryer, 1995).

In light of these key differences in IF and CF, it is now necessary to further examine how Focus is used to organise information in discourse.

2.3.1.4 Focus Constructions

Cross-linguistically, all languages appear to allow the initial position for contrast or emphatic constituents (Siewierska, 1994). In English, means of Focus such as it-clefts and preposing are often used to emphasise sentence-initial contrastive constituents; passive and wh-clefts, on the other hand, contain wide Focus in sentence-final position. All of these Focus constructions will

¹⁹In other words, IF could highlight a certain piece of information without implicit or explicit contrast.

be discussed in detail below, as focusing on the pragmatic functions of these constructions appears to be helpful and applicable to the present exploration.

2.3.1.4.1 Preposing

Preposing, also called focus fronting or focalisation (Callies, 2009), is a type of sentence in which ‘a postverbal phrasal element appears in preverbal place’ (Birner and Ward, 1998, p. 31). Consequently, in preposing, the agent remains in the preverbal position.

Interestingly, Birner and Ward (1998, p. 84) argue that the proposed element, which is the focus of the utterance, is under the most constrained rules in English and cannot be used in discourse unless it is in one of two conditions: it must be produced earlier in discourse (it echoes preceding information; see example 2.22²⁰), or it contains a clear relationship between the preceding context and the preposed constituent, for example, type/subtype, part/whole or less than/greater than (see examples 2.23 and 2.24).

(2.22) Customer: *A large pizza* and a coke, please.

Waiter: A large pizza you ordered?

(2.23) I have two best *friends*, Jimmy and Mofeed their names are.

(adopted from Callies, 2009)

(2.24) You have *a brain*. The great body you have to work at.

(adopted from Callies, 2009)

²⁰In this example, inferable constituents are italicised and preposed constituents are underlined.

It is obvious in these examples (from 2.22 to 2.24) that focus preposing is very restricted in English, as the proposed constituent must be evoked in the previous discourse under the aforementioned conditions. Hence, even close synonyms seem to be disallowed, for instance, quit > #²¹ resign; thirsty># drink. This is further evidenced in the excerpts from Ward (1990, p. 757) in (2.25) and (2.26).

(2.25) I told my manager I was going to quit today. # And resign I did.

(2.26) a. Inside the truck were water bottles for students' *consumption*. And consume they did.

b. Inside the truck were water bottles for students' *consumption*. And # drink they did.

It is also clear that preposing carries pragmatic meanings in discourse such as confirmation (see example 2.22) and clarification (see examples 2.23 and 2.24) (Ward, 1990). In addition, the end of the clause in preposing is light because both the object and subject move ahead of the verb (OSV) according to weight distribution (Biber et al. 1999, p. 905).

In sum, preposing has information structure functions such as contrasting or emphasising a discourse element. However, its distribution is very restricted in English.

2.3.1.4.2 Clefts

Clefted structures involve the splitting of a sentence into two parts (clauses), thereby highlighting certain sentence elements, the clefted constituents (Callies, 2009). The most known kinds of clefts are it-clefts and pseudo or wh-clefts. Both of them have different ways of highlighting constituents in the sentence. With it-clefts, the speaker/writer highlights

²¹In this study, the '#' symbol has been used to indicate odd or awkward sentences.

important information in the initial position of the sentence (see example 2.27); wh-clefts, however, serve to highlight important information at the end of the clause in order to achieve cohesion and contrast (Prince, 1978; Erdmann, 1988; Collin, 1991), as illustrated in (2.28a).

(2.27) a. Maria visited Sara yesterday

b. It was [_{it-clefts} Maria] who visited Sara yesterday. (Focus on subject)

c. It was [_{it-clefts} Sara] whom Maria visited yesterday. (Focus on object)

d. It was [_{it-clefts} yesterday] that Maria visited Sara. (Focus on adverbial)

(2.28) a. What we need is [_{wh-clefts} moral support]. (Focus on object)

b. [_{rwh-clefts} Moral support] is what we need. (Focus on object)

Another type of cleft is a reverse or inverted wh-cleft (rwh-cleft), in which ‘the order of wh-cleft clause is simply reversed’ (Callies, 2009, p. 42). Similar to it-cleft, rwh-cleft presents initial focusing, but it also sometimes contains a demonstrative ‘this’ or ‘that’ in the initial position of the sentence. Hence, some linguists simply called this a demonstrative rwh-cleft (Collin, 1991; Ward, Birner and Huddleston, 2002); see example (2.29).

(2.29) As far as Grip is concerned, the debate about Beckham’s best position is a non-starter. ‘He plays *on the right wing* for Manchester United, and I’m sure Sir Alex Ferguson would know if there was a better place to play him,’ he said. ‘I accept that United have Roy Keane in their midfield, but if [_{rwh-clefts} that] is where Beckham plays his football every week then [_{rwh-clefts} that] is where he will feel most comfortable playing for England’.

The Guardian (Wilson, 2001, 18 March)

It is important to mention that although the clefted constituents must be related to the previous discourse, unlike with preposing (focus fronting), they can contain ‘that’ (see example 2.29), expected information²² or any synonyms that refer to previous information in discourse (see example 2.30) since the SVO/SVC²³ word order is retained (Callies, 2009). Even when the real subject moves elsewhere in the clause (as with it-clefts), the dummy or empty subject (‘it’ or ‘that’) is used before the verb to maintain the strict structure in English.

(2.30) The Capital Square was filled with *a wide variety of ethnic* foods, but it was [_{it-clefts} the diversity of people²⁴] that brought many on the 19th annual Taste of Madison on Sunday.

Capital Time web edition (2003, cited in Callies, 2009)

Admittedly, similar to preposing, all these kinds of clefts carry pragmatic functions. It-clefts are syntactic constructions for marking contrast (Kiss, 1998, p. 250; Callies, 2009, p. 45), which Ward, Birner and Huddleston (2002) support in their statement that ‘it-cleft is utilised when the foregrounded constituent is contrastive’ (ibid., p. 962). Consider example (2.27b), which has been restated in (2.31) as an example of a contrastive it-cleft.

(2.31) It was Maria who visited Sara.

In example (2.31), if someone says that “Jim visited Sara” and the listener knows that Sara was visited by Maria, she/he attempts to correct this error by presenting the sentence (2.31) above.

²²Expected information is, as Prince (1981) named it, ‘discourse-new and hearer-old’; Lambrecht (1994) defined it as ‘an inactive information’; see 2.3 for further information.

²³The abbreviation SVC stands for subject-verb-complement.

²⁴The diversity of people refers to ‘a wide variety of ethnic’ which is mentioned earlier in discourse.

Like it-clefts, wh-clefts present contrast (Ward, Birner and Huddleston, 2002, p. 1426); for instance, if someone says that ‘we need health and money’, and the listener wants to offer contrast to this sentence, she/he might offer example (2.32) to mark contradiction. Consider example (2.28a), which has been restated in (2.32) as an example of a contrastive wh-cleft.

(2.32) What we need is [wh-clefts moral support].

However, all types of clefts not only represent a contrastive function but also allow numerous additional functions relating to discourse. For instance, it-clefts emphasise the main communicative point of an utterance or sentence. It is clear in examples (2.33) and (2.34) that they do not show contrast but rather attract the reader’s attention to the main constituent in discourse.

(2.33) They trooped off into the night, short of food and water, but incredibly a freak rainstorm burst, turning the desert into a lake. It was [it-clefts at this stage] that the intensive training in navigation paid off. When dawn broke, the rain ceased and the various parties were able to take stock of their positions.

British National Corpus (2007, AR8 343–345, cited in Callies, 2009)

(2.34) Hitting me with her little fists, but I couldn’t get the smile off my face. For some reason I couldn’t, though I could see it was that which infuriated her more than anything. I wanted to but I couldn’t. Your smile destroyed her, Goldberg said. She told me [it-clefts it was your smile] that did it.

British National Corpus (2007, A08 1504–1508, cited in Callies, 2009)

Additionally, wh-clefts delay the focused clause for strong communicative reasons, for instance, ‘buying time in spontaneous context’ (Hopper, 2001, p. 120). Weinert and Miller (1996) give further proof that contrastiveness is not an obligatory condition for clefts. They discovered that 36% of it-clefts and only around 0.6% of wh-clefts in their data indicated overt contrast. Consequently, while their corpus results illustrate that ‘it-clefts are the selected cleft for expressing explicit contrast and focusing on subjects’ (ibid., p. 205), they also confirm that ‘it-clefts could be contrastive and non-contrastive’ (ibid., p. 200) and that ‘only a minority of clefts express contrast’ (ibid., p. 179). Similarly, Callies (2009) also notes that it-clefts often mark contrastiveness but may also carry other pragmatic functions, such as exclusiveness or clarification. A clear difference between the contrastive and non-contrastive conditions of it-clefts can be found in most of the relevant literature²⁵.

Rwh-clefts also have powerful discourse functions. When ‘this’ is in the initial position or in the absence of ‘this’ and ‘that’, they are frequently utilised to attract attention (i.e., as an attention maker; see example 2.35), to reference that which has been discussed earlier or to sum up previous context (Weinert, 1995; Biber, 1999; Einert and Miller, 1996); see example (2.36).

(2.35) If you get an abusive phone call, hang up immediately and do not say anything! [rwh-clefts
An emotional reaction] is what the caller wants.

British National Corpus (2007, ARA 158, cited in Callies, 2009)

²⁵See, for instance, Prince (1978), Geluykens (1988), Delin and Oberlander (1995) and Callies (2009).

(2.36) Crash survivor Pam Warren, who founded the Paddington Survivors Group, today spoke of her hope that the inquiry report would give ‘closure’ to survivors. ‘The report will officially recognize what happened on the day and [rwh-clefts that] is what I mean by closure,’ she told GMTV.

(Paddington: Railtrack's 'lamentable failure', 2001)

It is crucial to clarify that, unlike preposing, clefted structures are less constrained, so these structures the preferred options for native English speakers (Callies, 2009).

2.3.1.4.3 Passive

There are two kinds of sentences; active and passive. In the former, which has a canonical word order (SVO), the subject is the agent, whereas in the latter the subject position is filled by the object of the active (Khalil, 2000). The agent can either come as the object of the preposition or turn to be agentless passive (deleted).

The agentless passive gives writers/ speakers a chance to highlight another sentence part, either the predicate or the semantic object, see example (2.37).

(2.37) [_{Focus} The package] has been sent.

Also, the agentless passive gives writers/ speakers a chance to focus on complements or adverbials as in the coming examples (2.38a) and (2.38b):

(2.38) a. The package was painted [_{Focus} GREEN].

b. The package was left [_{Focus} UNCLOSED].

Unlike the agentless passive, one of the essential uses of the agentive passive is to put the agent at the end- focus position (Khalil, 2000), as in the following example:

(2.39) Speaker A: Who typed the package?

Speaker B: The package was typed by [_{Focus} the HEADTEACHER].

In (2.39), the agent the HEADTEACHER is new information and is placed at end-focus in order to meet the two principles ‘end-focus’ and ‘given before new’ (see 2.3 of this study).

Another important use of the agentive passive is to put the long agent constituent at the end-focus position in order to make processing the sentence/utterance easier (see example 2.40). Ryding (2005) claims the main reason for delaying the subject until the end of the sentence is ease of information flow; especially when an abnormally long subject element appears in a sentence (as noted in 2.3 of this study). Hence, postponing the subject makes the sentence satisfies the principles of IS, namely end-focus.

(2.40) The treasure was opened by [_{Focus} the strongest man in the city who all people love him].

It is clear that passive is considered one of the Focus means as it is used in discourse to package information in accordance with IS principles. However, we focus on non-canonical word order patterns in this study, such as preposing and different kinds of clefts. Passive is an interesting topic for upcoming research.

2.3.2 Givenness

In the previous section, the first important category of IS, ‘Focus’, was described. We now move to the second essential category of IS: ‘Givenness’. Halliday's (1967) theory of

information structure described ‘Givenness’ as the remainder within an information unit before the determination of what is new or focus. An idea or a referent may be accessible or a reminder to a hearer. There are various sources that may make a term ‘recoverable’ to the hearer. Chafe (1976) explains that human languages have constructions with which speakers can make hearers mindful that something demonstrated in the immediate linguistic setting is taken up again. Prince (1981) and Lambrecht (1994) refer to ‘Givenness’ as ‘discourse old- hearer old’ and ‘an active item’ that was mentioned earlier in the context, and thus, it can be expressed pronominally or lexically (see 2.3 of this study). In a similar vein, Halliday (1967, p. 211) states that the Given parts are those which are ‘recoverable anaphorically or syntactically’ and these will be discussed next.

As in Focus, we have listed some Focus devices, clefts and preposing, we also list here some devices of givenness. First, anaphoric expressions (such as pronouns, definite articles²⁶ and clitics²⁷) which have Givenness characteristics. For example, they are used to direct attention to some remarks mentioned earlier in discourse and that is the clearest feature of Givenness in IS (Prince, 1981; Walker, 1998; and Gundel 1993); see example (2.41).

(2.41) Maria went to school. [Given She] found a lizard [Given there].

In (2.41), the forms ‘she’ and ‘there’ indicate their denotations are Given since they refer to something before.

²⁶Definite articles can be utilised to implicate that the denotation is Given while indefinite articles implicate that their referent is not Given; see Féry (2006) and Master (2009) for more information about definite articles and their relation to IS.

²⁷For further details about clitics and their relation to IS, see Kechagias (2011).

Second, some grammatical means, such as, deletion, ordering and deaccentuation, help the hearer or the reader to know that there is Given information in context, as illustrated in (2.42).

(2.42) a. Maria [goes to school], and Sara does_ too. (deletion)

b. Maria introduced [_{Given} the man] to [_{New} a woman].

c.# Maria introduced [_{Given} a man] to [_{New} the woman].

d. After Sara inherited her mom's jewelry, she sold [_{Given} the necklace].

In (2.42) sentence (a) shows the verb phrase (VP) ellipsis as it refers back to the first VP denotation. Sentences in (b, c) illustrate that the sentence in (c) is odd and (b) is felicitous because the given information [the man], which has the definite article, must precede the new information [a woman], which has the indefinite article²⁸(Holes, 1995).

In example (2.42 d) the 'necklace' is deaccentuated and should be comprehensible as it refers back to the jewelry. It would mean another thing that comes with 'jewelry' if it were not deaccentuated²⁹.

In sum, Givenness has an immediate influence on meaning. Thus, failing to set them right results in wrong information. Conversely, Focus-syntactic constructions do not affect the sentence meaning, but, affect the surface of the sentence and lead to pragmatic uses of Focus such as

²⁸ This is the double object rule in English grammar, which called the priority of the word order that given information must precede the new information (see Weil, 1844).

²⁹ The example corresponds to examples used by Umbeach (2003) and Féry (2006).

correcting or confirming information. Hence, failing to choose the right focus generally results in incoherent communication (Féry, 2006).

2.3.3 Topic and Comment

We have seen at the beginning of this chapter that there is a considerable degree of overlap with terms of IS categories (Molnár, 2001, p. 147), also there are other similar categories such as Topic and Comment which are identified by several linguists such as Halliday (1970), Chafe (1976), Reinhart (1981), Van Kuppevelt (1994) and Lambrecht (1994).

The concepts ‘Topic’ and ‘Comment’ are utilised generally to demonstrate what has been brought into linguistic thinking as ‘psychological subject’ by von der Gabelentz (1869), who utilised the former ‘Topic’ to point out the thing that the writer/speaker is thinking about, and the later ‘Comment’ to what the writer/speaker is thinking about the Topic. In theories of communication, the information is organized in human memory in such a way that it can be said to be ‘about’ something which a speaker identifies and that is the Topic; then the information which comes later, the Comment, is given (Féry, 2006). Reinhart (1982) argues that the Topic constituent determines the entity under which the information appeared in the Comment constituent and the Comment constituent increases the addressees’ knowledge about the Topic, like information in a file card that bears a particular heading. The heading of the file is the Topic whereas the Comment is all the information in that file about the Topic, as exemplified in (2.43).

(2.43) a. [_{Topic} Isaac] [_{Comment} married Maria].

b. [_{Topic} Maria] [_{Comment} married Isaac].

It is clear in example (2.43), that (2.43 a and b) has the same proposition, however, they are structured differently. In (2.43a) all information is stored about Isaac, whereas in (2.43b) all information is stored about Maria.

It is important to mention here that, similar to the term ‘Focus’, ‘Topic’ as a notion is used vaguely in the literature. Vallduví (1992) and Vallduví & Engdahl (1996) have utilised the concept ‘Ground’ to represent ‘Topic’ and conflated it with the ‘Given’ notion. In the Prague School, the term ‘Topic’ is labeled ‘Theme’ and mixed up with the ‘old information’³⁰ (e.g., Daneš, 1970). However, there are many cases where the Topic constituent comes as a new Topic in discourse, as illustrated in (2.44).

(2.44) [_{Topic} As for Susan], [_{Comment} she was a good student in my class].

In the example (2.44) above, it is obvious that Topic delivers new information about Susan. Thus, in this point I go with Callies’s (2009) view which divides ‘Topic’ into two different notions³¹. The first, is similar to the Prague school of linguistics that correlates the term of ‘Theme’ with ‘Topic’ that the term ‘Topic’ can be utilised to refer to the item that comes first in a context and also contains presupposed/given information. Second, ‘Topic’ can be used generally to indicate what the clause is about, known as the concept of ‘aboutness’, which could carry new information or expected information³² in discourse.

Topic ‘aboutness’ involves Topic Fronting or Contrastive Topicalisation (CT) where the topicalised constituent does not have the focus of utterance. It is placed as the sentence theme or topic for contrast, and hence, unlike preposing which has many constraining rules, such as

³⁰ See section 2.3 of this study.

³¹ See Sornicola (1994) and Féry (2000, p. 138-139) for discussion.

³² This is shown in Prince (1981)) called this ‘a discourse-new and hearer-old’ and in Lambrecht (1994) called this ‘an inactive information’; see 2.3 of this study for further details.

that it must be produced earlier in discourse (see 2.3.1.4.1), CT comes as a new Topic in discourse that carries information about what the sentence is about. This is illustrated in an example (2.45) that goes back to Birner and Ward (1998, p. 38).

(2.45)

a. Do you play baseball?

b. No, [CT football] [Comment [FI] like more].

The question here is whether the second term of ‘Topic’ could relate to IS or not. No doubt, Topic and Comment are considered as a package phenomenon and they do relate to IS since the Topic constituent precedes the Comment in utterance. Also, it is imperative to state that Topic is considered to be one of the terms of IS since it is used in context to convey different communicative needs. For example, CT has pragmatic meanings that are compatible with the idea of clarification (see example 2.46 and example 2.47) as CF always does³³.

(2.46)

a. Where does your sibling go?

b. [Topic My [CT brother]], [Comment he goes to [F Manchester]] and [Topic my [CT sister]], [Comment she goes to [F London]].

(2.47)

a. Speaker A: Who ate my soup?

³³ For more details about the functions of Topic, see Robert (1996) and Büring (1998, 2003).

b. Speaker B: I do know who ate your soup but [_{Topic} your [_{CT} chocolate]] [_{Comment} [_F Maria] ate].

In example (2.46), it is clear in the sense that the CT clarifies the proposition about who siblings are (sister or brother) and in example (2.47) the CT contains new information (or expected information) that helps clarify the proposition about who might have eaten the soup, which is similar to what CF always does: narrowing down the alternatives. Finally, it is important to note that the main stress of the sentences in above examples (2.46b and 2.47b) is on the Focus, i.e., on Comment, and the secondary stress is on the CT that is on Topic.

It is important to mention here that, despite these vague and various definitions of Topic, there are some markers that describe the Topic of a sentence, such as ‘Regarding’ ..., ‘As for’ ..., or ‘According to’ ... (see Ward, Birnar and Huddleston, 2002) which often associate with Topic to facilitate reference to what the clause is about.

To sum up, there are two notions of Topic. The first notion refers to the item that comes first in a context and also contains presupposed/given information. This is similar to the Prague School’s view. Second, Topic can be used generally to indicate what the clause is about, known as the concept of ‘aboutness’. It is clear that Topic and Comment are considered to be terms of IS since they carry out pragmatic functions in discourse.

2.4 A Comparative Look of Syntax of English & Arabic

2.4.1 Introduction

English presents a fairly rigid word order, where reordering is syntactically restricted. In contrast, Arabic allows for permutations on its word orders and most grammars of the language generally fail to give reasons for word order permutations in a sentence (Bakir, 1979). In fact, Arabic is a language with a wealth of syntactic constructions that are pragmatically motivated. However, there are only two comparative works between Arabic and English which discuss the variations in terms of word order with respect to the information structure: Khlil's (2000) and Alzaidi's (2014) studies.

The coming section aims to look briefly at Arabic IS and how it presents syntactically. Then, a comparison between syntactic structures of Arabic and English that mark IS categories is presented. Comparing the structures between both languages should empower second language researchers and linguists to know the challenges that learners face while trying to learn a second language (Lado, 1971). But before that, some general features of Arabic will be discussed, to familiarise the reader with some fundamental rules and facts about Arabic which will be necessary for the rest of this study. This chapter answers the first research question addressed by this thesis and adds to the sparse literature.

Section 2.4.2 briefly introduces some background about Arabic and gives a brief examination of what appears to identify word orders in Arabic declarative sentences. According to these word order variations, the two kinds of Focus, IF and CF, are demonstrated in section 2.4.2.1 and different kinds of Topic are presented in section 2.4.2.2. Finally, section 2.4.3 presents a brief comparison between Arabic and English in marking IS that will be essential for the remaining part of the study and Section 2.4.5 concludes the chapter.

2.4.2 Information Structure in Arabic

Before the IS categories and their syntactic constructions, available in Arabic, are explained, it is worthwhile to give some background information about the way medieval Arab rhetoricians or grammarians dealt with syntactical analysis and pragmatic functions of Arabic.

The term IS was hardly mentioned by medieval Arab rhetoricians and grammarians of the eighth- century, including Sibawayh who was the first grammarian of Arabic. They focused on the term of Topic (al-mubtada) which was used to express the first part in a sentence, however, there has been and still is confusion and disagreement about the role and the nature of this term essentially in classic Arabic syntax³⁴. This is possibly because Sibawayh and others at that time planned to maintain the classical language rather than examine it according to its pragmatic functions (Alsweel, 1983, p. 24). Arab grammarians put all their interest on the syntactic (grammatical) motivation for word order inversions, particularly about fronting the Topic (see example 2.48) and postponing it (see example 2.49b) and expanded on the conditions behind optional and obligatory fronting, placing very little prominence on pragmatic motivations. They argued that parts of the sentence are fronted for interest and relevance (al-ināyah wa al-ihtimām), however, they failed to examine when and/or why these parts were considered relevant.

(2.48) [Topic al- mu'allima-won] [Comment madah-hum al-mudīr'].

³⁴ See Al- Sweel (1983, p. 20-30) for more discussion about 'al-mubtada' (Topic) followed by 'Al-kabar' (Comment).

DEF³⁵- teachers-3PS³⁶ praised-3PS DEF-principal-NOM

The teachers, the principal praised them.

(2.49) a. [Topic al-bint] [Comment fi al-masbah].

DEF-girl in DEF-swimming pool

The girl in the swimming pool.

b. [Comment fi al-masbah] [Topic al-bint].

in DEF-swimming pool DEF-girl

The girl in the swimming pool.

In example (2.48), the Topic is obligatorily fronted because one of the conditions in Arabic grammar is Topic must be fronted when the verb has a pronoun corresponds with that Topic (conditions about Topic in Arabic will be explained in detail in 2.4.2.2). Also, the Topic is optionally fronted (as in example 2.49a) or postponed (as in 2.49b) because one of conditions in Arabic grammar is that Comment may precede Topic when it comes in the shape of a prepositional phrase followed by definite Topic.

It is clear that Arab grammarians interpreted the reasons for fronting the Topic according to Arabic grammatical rules, and not according to its functional impacts on information structure

³⁵ The subscript DEF and Ø refer to definite and indefinite articles.

³⁶ Three abbreviations are used in this study to refer to English pronouns: 1) '1PS' refers to the first person pronouns such as I and we; 2) '2PS' refers to the second person pronouns such as you and your; and 3) '3PS' refers to the third person pronouns such as she, he, it and they (as mentioned in 1.1).

in a context. They only gave one functional reason for fronting either Topic or Comment, that was to show the prominence of the constituent at the initial position of a sentence. Hence, it remained unknown why or when the Topic is obligatory or optionally fronted according to its functions. This criticism was mentioned by Al- Jurjāni (n.d), the rhetorician and grammarian of the eleventh century.

Al- Jurjāni, in his book (the Miracle Guidelines) (Dalā'il al-ijāz), added a pragmatic and contextual dimension to classic Arabic linguistic analysis. He claimed that fronting and postponement must be treated in pragmatic, syntactic and semantic terms. He asserted the relation between word order and pragmatic and rhetorical meanings, depending on the discourse. Owen (2010) argues that one of Al- Jurjāni's essential contributions 'was to improve in an analysis of the pragmalinguistic structures in Arabic' (ibid., p. 5).

After Al- Jurjāni's contribution, some researchers started to look at the relation between IS and syntax, in the area of Arabic linguistics and went on for many years (see Parkinson (1981), El-Yasin (1985), Owens (1988), Moutoakil (1989), Holes (1995), Al-Shorafat (1998), Brusted (2000), Khalil (2000), Edwards (2010), Alzaidi (2014) and others.

Moutoakil (1989) was, to my knowledge, the first one to identify and examine the IS categories in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and its relations with word order patterns and many writers followed him, such as Holes (2005) and Ingham (2010).

Moutoakil (1989, p. 10-11) begins from the basis that word orders in Arabic declarative sentences³⁷ are not determined by grammar but are triggered by pragmatic functions. Moutoakil

³⁷ In this study, I only focus on the word orders in Arabic declarative sentences not on the word orders in questions. The topic of question formalisation in Arabic is an interesting one, which could be usefully examined in later studies.

(1989) argues that the basic word order VSO³⁸ is the only one that can be used in sentences or in responses to questions that do not imply pragmatic meanings. Other word orders carry various pragmatic meanings, such as correction and clarification (see Focus in 2.4.2.1 and Topic in 2.4.2.2 of this study).

Moutoakil (1989) finds that Arabic manifests various word orders, such as VSO, SVO, SOV, VOS, OAVS³⁹, ONVS, OASV, and ONSV word orders, as seen respectively in (2.50).

(2.50) a. [v akla] [s Ammar] [o al-mozah]. (VSO)

ate Ammar DEF- banana

Ammar ate the banana.

b. [s Ammar] [v akla] [o al-mozah]. (SVO)

Ammar ate DEF- banana

Ammar ate the banana.

c. [S Ammar] [o al-moza] [v akla]. (SOV)

Ammar DEF- banana ate

It was Ammar who ate the banana.

³⁸ Arabic declarative sentence divides into a nominal sentence and a verbal sentence. The nominal sentence has Topic (noun phrase) followed by Comment (noun phrase). In the verbal sentence, the most common basic word order is VSO, however, some clauses may also exhibit SVO order. Many researchers argue that if a subject or a noun phrase precedes the verb in a sentence, this type of a sentence is also considered to be a nominal sentence. For more details about the nominal and the verbal sentence in Arabic, see Haywood and Nahmad (1965); Anshen Schreiber (1968).

³⁹ The subscript A and ACC refer to Accusative case marker (/). N and NOM refer to Nominative case marker (.). When the object comes first, the case depends on the pragmatic function of the structure. This is demonstrated in more details in the 2.4.2.2 of this study.

d. [v akla] [o al-mozah] [s Ammar]. (VOS)

ate DEF- banana Ammar

Ammar ate the banana.

e. [o al-moza/] [v akla] [S Ammar]. (OAVS)

DEF-banana-ACC ate Ammar

It was the banana that Ammar ate.

f. [o al-moza:] [v akla-ha] [S Ammar]. (ONVS)

DEF- banana-NOM ate- 3PS Ammar

The banana, Ammar ate it.

g. [o al-moza/] [S Ammar] [v akla]. (OASV)

DEF- banana-ACC Ammar ate

It was the banana that Ammar ate.

h. [o al-moza:] [S Ammar] [v akla-ha]. (ONSV)

DEF- banana-NOM Ammar ate-3PS

The banana, Ammar ate it.

All these word orders shown above which diverge from the basic word order (VSO) carry different pragmatic meanings according to IS which will be discussed in detail in the following sections (see 2.4.2.1.2 and 2.4.2.2). Moreover, all these variations in word order shown above are possible and common in Arabic. This is not surprising since Li and Thompson (1976)

categorise Arabic, among other languages, to be ‘topic- oriented’ language so that grammatical factors have little impact on determining word order. Generally, on the basis of word order characteristics, some languages have been called ‘configurational’ and others ‘discourse-configurational’ or ‘topic-oriented’. In a configurational language, the syntactic functions of object and subject appear in a particular structural relationship to each other. English is the standard example of a configurational language, where the grammatical functions of object and subject can be understood from their place in a sentence (Hale, 1983). On the other hand, Arabic is an example of a discourse-configuration, where the words in a sentence appear to be ordered according to the discourse functions. Li and Thompson (1976) mention that the discourse-configurational languages have three properties: first, free word orders (i.e., verb, subject and object can occur in any order); second, extensive use of null-anaphora (i.e., pronouns which are pragmatically inferable); and thirdly, free omission of noun phrases expressing object and subject.

Bakir (1979) supports Li and Thompson (1976) and adds one another feature, which is that discourse-configurational languages have a case marking system. Bakir (1979) argues that one of the reasons that interprets the little impact of grammar rules on Arabic word orders is the case marking system that Arabic has. For example, the subject typically has a nominative ‘damma’ (’) case marker and the object has an accusative ‘fattha’ (/) if they are singular nouns⁴⁰.

The presence of the case markers in Arabic helps word order inversions because these case markers help distinguish between syntactic functions in a sentence. However, sometimes the case marking system fails to mark grammatical arguments. This happens when the case marker, which consistently appears at the end of the word, cannot be included since the word ends with

⁴⁰ For more details about Arabic case markers see Fassi –Fehri (1993) and Sawaie (2014).

a vowel letter rather than a consonant letter. When this happens, the basic word order VSO becomes the only option that must be selected (Bakir, 1979); see example 2.51a.

(2.51)

a. ra'at Muna Yusra. (VSO)

saw Muna Yusra

Muna saw Yusra.

b. #⁴¹ra'at Yusra Muna. (#VOS)

saw Yusra Muna

Yusra saw Muna.

It is clear in this example (2.51) that the lack of case marking on the noun demands the first noun to be interpreted as the Subject and what follows as the object (as in 2.51a) and this object cannot precede the subject in this case (as in 2.51b). Hence, the case marking system in Arabic is an essential factor in the ease of word order variations.

To sum up, this section shows Arabic word order variations and how the case markers help the mobility of word orders, and thus, it is not such a rigid language as English. Its word orders differ to express pragmatic functions. Based on this claim, we will explore what some of the IS categories are and how they are triggered in Arabic in the following section.

⁴¹ In this study, the '#' symbol has been used to indicate odd or awkward sentences (as noted before).

2.4.2.1 Focus

Similar to English (see 2.3.1 of this study), Focus in Arabic also has two kinds: Information Focus and Contrastive Focus. Both kinds of Focus will be explained in detail next.

2.4.2.1.1 Information Focus

Moutoakil (1989) defines information focus (IF), in the sense defined in 2.3.1.1 of this study, as a constituent that conveys new information in the context and corresponds to a wh question. Moutoakil (1989) mentions that IF is realised in- situ in the syntax in Arabic. This means that the constituent carrying IF cannot be dislocated in Arabic syntax (as exemplified in 2.52).

(2.52) a. matha sharab-ta?

What drank-2PS

What did you drink?

b. Sharab-tu [IF al-halīb]. (VSO)

drank-1PS DEF-milk

I drank the milk.

c. # [IF al-halīb] sharab-tu. (#OVS)

DEF-milk drank-1PS

It was the milk that I drank.

Following Moutoakil's (1989) view, Alzaidi (2014) argues that there are three linguistic characteristics of IF in Arabic. Firstly, IF cannot be expressed by focus preposing as in (2.53c), a pseudo (wh-) clefts as in (2.53d), it- clefts as in (2.53e), or rwh-clefts as in (2.53f).

(2.53) a. A: man qabal Ammar ams?

whom met Ammar yesterday?

Whom did Ammar meet yesterday?

b. B1: qabal Ammar [_{IF} Jan] ams. (VSO)

met Ammar Jan yesterday

Ammar met Jan yesterday.

c. B2: # [_{IF} Jan] Ammar qabal ams. #Focus Preposing

Jan Ammar met yesterday

Jan Ammar met yesterday.

d. B3: # illi Ammar qabal ams kân [_{IF} Jan]. #Pseudo Cleft (wh-clefts)

the one Ammar met yesterday was Jan

The one who Ammar met yesterday was Jan.

e. B4: # innahu [_{IF} Jan] illa Ammar qabal-hu ams. #It-clefts

it was Jan the one Ammar met-3PS yesterday

It was Jan who Ammar met yesterday.

f. B5: # [_{IF} Jan] huwa illa Ammar qabal-hu ams. #Rwh-clefts

Jan 3PS the one Ammar met-3PS yesterday

Jan was the one whom Ammar met yesterday.

The sentences in (2.53c), (2.53d), (2.53e), and (2.53f) are pragmatically odd to answer the question in (2.53a).

The second linguistic feature is that the IF in Arabic is not compatible with negation (as shown in example 2.54).

(2.54) a. A: man Ammar qabal ams?

whom Ammar met yesterday?

Whom did Ammar meet yesterday?

b. B1: # La Ammar met [IF Jan] ams. (SVO)

no Ammar met Jan yesterday

No, Ammar met Jan yesterday.

The final feature is that a clause in Arabic can carry two information foci⁴² (as illustrated in example 2.55).

(2.55) a. man qabal man

who met who?

Who met who?

b. [F Khlid] qabal [F Mohammad] (SVO)

Khlid met Mohammad

Khlid met Mohammad.

⁴² For more information about Arabic morphology, see Brustad (2000) and Aoun et al. (2009).

The possibility of the clause carrying many foci is also observed in English⁴³ as in (2.56b), Chinese as in (2.57b) and other languages.

(2.56) a. Who did you introduce to whom?

English

b. I introduced [_F Sue] to [_F Bill].

(Kadmon, 2000, p. 252)

(2.57) a. Sh'ei tou sh'ei de wo' ?

Chinese

who steals whose nest?

‘Who steals whose nest?’

b. [_F Maom' i] t' ou [_F wuy' a] w' o.

a Kitten steals a raven nest

A kitten steals a raven nest.

(Kabagema-Bilan et al. 2011, p. 1903)

To summarise, this section has shown that IF in Arabic must be evoked linguistically at ‘in-situ’ positions and has demonstrated that IF in Arabic has three features: (i) it cannot be presented by focus preposing, by pseudo clefts, by it-clefts or by rwh-clefts. (ii) it is not

⁴³ Wold (1998) shows that in many languages, such as English, a clause can contain two foci maximally.

compatible with negation, and finally (iii) a clause can contain more than one Focus. The next section will present how CF is evoked linguistically in Arabic and how it varies from IF.

2.4.2.1.2 Contrastive Focus

Similar to CF in English (see 2.3.1.2 in this study), Moutoakil (1989) defines CF in Arabic as a constituent that implies new information, stands in a contrastive relation to another item and carries a contrastive meaning. Moutoakil (1989) argues that the CF item can be realised at the left periphery of the clause in Arabic, as in (2.58b), and cannot be expressed ‘in-situ’, as in (2.58c).

(2.58) a. ā Ammar/ qabl-ta am Maria/?

Q Ammar- ACC met-2PS or Maria-ACC

Was it Ammar you met or Maria?

b. [_{CF}Ammar/] [qabl-tu]. (OVS)

Ammar-ACC met-1PS

Ammar I met.

c. # qabl-tu [_{CF} Ammar/]. (# VSO)

met-1PS Ammar-ACC

I met Ammar.

Arabic uses word order permutations⁴⁴ to mark CF at left periphery in order to render different pragmatic meanings. Some types of word order inversions are: Firstly, the subject can precede the verb for contrastive meaning and retain the expected nominative case marker on it (see example 2.59).

(2.59) [CF wald'] hadr. (SV)

Ø- boy-NOM came

A boy came.

This sentence in the example (2.59) could be produced to correct a misunderstanding about either the number or sex of the referent. That is, the sentence may be used to correct wrong information, showing that only one boy came (and not two or three) or that a boy came (rather than a girl). Historically, the term of a preposed subject seems to have a heated debate among classic Arabic schools and modern Arabic schools. The classic schools, such as the Basra school of grammar, held that the SVO word order was never a possible word order. However, its acceptance in current grammar appears widespread; Ryding (2005) argues to the popular usage of SVO word order for the headline of a magazine and a newspaper. Hence, SVO functions as a kind of ‘attention-getter’⁴⁵.

Secondly, the object can precede both the verb and the subject while maintaining its expected accusative case marker in order to correct the statement (see example 2.60b).

⁴⁴ The reason that I use the term ‘word order permutations’ and not ‘preposing’ is because ‘word order permutations’ is more general and has less constraints, whereas ‘preposing’ has many constraints (i.e., no constituent in the sentence can separate the subject from the verb).

⁴⁵ For more details about the preposed subject in Arabic, see Al-Sweel (1983) and Kremers (2003).

(2.60) a. Jack: bana al-ab' qasr/ li ā'ilati -h. (VSO)

built DEF-father-NOM Ø- castle-ACC for family-3PS

The father built a castle for his family.

b. Maria: [CF (O) bait/] vbana s al-ab' wa laysa qasr/. (OAVS)

Ø- house-ACC built DEF-father-NOM and not Ø- castle-ACC

It was a house, not a castle that the father built.

In this example (2.60b), Maria fronted the indefinite object (house) (bait) to correct Jack's utterance, that it was not a castle that the father built but a house, and her sentence satisfies the rule that the contrastive focused element usually comes first in Arabic. Additionally, as shown in the same example (2.60b) above, there is no obligatory pronoun attached to the verb to refer to the contrastive focus. Also, there is no restrictions on definiteness for contrastive focus, it can be an indefinite noun phrase, however, it can also be a definite one⁴⁶ (Farghal, 1992).

Finally, the object can precede the verb and cause deletion of the subject in order to demonstrate a pragmatic meaning of specification, however, there is a pronoun attached before the verb to refer to the deleted subject (see example 2.61).

(2.61)

[CF Allah/] nu⁴⁷-sadiqu. (OV)

God-ACC 1SP- believe

⁴⁶ The difference between contrastive focus and contrastive topic, will be discussed in detail next in 2.4.2.2 of this study.

⁴⁷ The pronoun attaches to the verb to refer to the omitted subject not to the fronted object.

God we trust.

In the example (2.61), the object is fronted and the subject (we) is omitted for specification that our trust is restricted to God.

Moutoakil (1989) also states that, other than word order inversions, there are two linguistic characteristics⁴⁸ associated with the CF in Arabic. First, CF can be expressed by various syntactic constructions⁴⁹. For example, Arabic uses ‘it-clefts’ (as in example 2.62b), ‘rwh-clefts’ (as in example 2.62c), and ‘wh- clefts’ (as in 2.62d) to mark contrast.

For instance, if someone says the following sentence in (2.62),

(2.62) a. Akal Isaac al-mozah. (VSO)

ate Isaac DEF-banana

Isaac ate the banana.

If the listener knows that Maria is the one who ate the banana, not Isaac, this listener would produce one of these sentences (2.62b, 2.62c, 2.62d) below to correct misunderstanding.

(2.62) b. innaha [CF Maria] allati aklat al-mozah wa laysa Isaac. It-clefts

it was Maria who ate DEF- banana not Isaac

It was Maria who ate the banana, not Isaac.

⁴⁸ All of these characteristics of CF identified by Moutoakil (1989) have been examined syntactically and phonologically by Ouhalla (1999b) and Alzaidi (2014) among others.

⁴⁹ See section 2.3.1.4 for more details about syntactic constructions to mark contrastive focus in English.

c. [CF Maria] kāna hiya man akala al-mozah wa laysa Isaac. Rwh-clefts

Maria was 3PS who ate DEF- banana and not Isaac

Maria was the one who ate the banana, not Isaac.

d. Man Alla akala al-mozah kāna [CF Maria]. Wh-clefts

who was ate DEF- banana was Maria

The one who ate the banana was Maria.

In examples (2.62b), (2.62c) and (2.62d), the subject ‘Maria’ represents the CF and it presents new information in discourse. Moreover, the underlined words show the extra words that are added in each sentence to form clefted structures. Hence, clefts are rarely used in Arabic as all these different kinds of clefts (it-clefts, rwh-cleft and wh-cleft) need additional words to be added to form a sentence⁵⁰. It is crucial to mention here that Arabic depends basically on the use of word order variations to mark CF due to the case marking system that Arabic has (as mentioned earlier in 2.4.2). Also, due to the simplicity rules of word order variations, the same words exchange their places in a sentence and, unlike clefts, no extra words are added.

The second feature is that CF is compatible with negation, or what is called (negative-restrictive) constructions, such as ‘only’ (illā/faqat) or the negative particle (mā) followed by the exceptive (illā), as in (2.63b), to mark exclusiveness.

⁵⁰ For more information about Arabic morphology, see Brustad (2000) and Aoun et al. (2009).

(2.63) a. Have you seen Maria or Omar?

b. mā ashhad-tu illā/faqat [_{CF}Maria]. Negative restrictive Constructions

not have seen-1PS only Maria

I have seen only Maria.

It is clear that CF can be expressed at the right periphery of the clause when it associates with the syntactic devices, such as wh-clefts, and negative constructions, see again (2.62d and 2.63b) above.

To sum up, CF, unlike IF (mentioned earlier in 2.4.2.1.1 of this study), must be expressed either ex-situ in the syntax or be realised in one of the syntactic devices in (2.62) above (Alzaidi, 2014). Moreover, CF is compatible with negation. Nevertheless, it cannot be expressed in-situ as shown above unless it associates with negative constructions or syntactic devices of CF, such as wh-clefts. In addition, Arabic depends more on ex-situ in the syntax (word order inversions) to present CF than on the syntactic devices since there is no-restrictions on word order movements. These characteristics make contrastive focus vary from information focus. Thus, CF forms an independent IS type that cannot be categorised under IF.

2.4.2.2 Topic and Comment

Another IS category is the Topic, like the Topic in English (see 2.3.3), that indicates what the clause is about, known as the concept of ‘aboutness’ will be discussed in this section.

The Topic⁵¹ in Arabic is a nominal element (noun phrase) pointing out the thing that the writer/speaker is thinking about. The Topic is normally followed by the Comment. This Comment could be either a nominal element (noun phrase), as in example (2.64), or a verbal sentence (VSO), as in example (2.65), and it points out what the writer/speaker is thinking about the Topic.

(2.64) [Topic (n)⁵² al-wardh] [Comment (n) jamilah] jed. (nn)

DEF- flower beautiful very

The flower is very beautiful.

(2.65) [Topic O (n) al-talib'] [Comment [V madah-hu] [S al-mu'allim']]. (ONVS)

DEF- student-NOM praised-3PS DEF- teacher-NOM

The teacher praised the student.

One kind of Topic is contrastive topic (CT) or what is called topicalisation (topic fronting); it contains an 'aboutness' topic that associates with Focus (as mentioned in 2.3.3). For example, if there is a new pen and a new book on the table. Then, someone held the pen and then asked, "Who bought the pen?". The listener does not know who bought the pen, but he/she knows who bought the book. He/she could say something like (2.66) or (2.67) for clarification.

(2.66)

⁵¹ See Khalil (2000) and Aoun et al. (2009, Ch.8) for more detail about Topic in Arabic.

⁵² The subscript (n) refers to the noun phrase.

haqīqatan ana la ‘ariff shay’an aan al-qalam lakinamma [CT al-kitab’] fa [CF Omar’]
ashtara-hu.

Actually I do not know anything about DEF-pen but DEF- book-NOM, Omar-NOM
bought-3PS

Actually, I don’t know anything about the pen, but the book Omar bought it.

(2.67)

[Topic amma [CT (O) al-kitab’]] [Comment fa [CF(S) Omar’] [V ashtara-hu]. (ONSV)

as for DEF- book- NOM , Omar-NOM bought-3PS

As for the book, Omar bought it.

It is essential to mention here that in the examples (2.66) and (2.67), the object precedes the subject and the verb in order to assign the CT which clarify information about the ‘book’. Also, the subject precedes the verb in order to assign the CF (i.e., Omar and nobody else bought the book).

The question here is how we can differentiate between CT and CF in Arabic. The key to distinguishing between object Focus and object Topic is the case markers (Farghal 1992). While Focus structures maintain the accusative ‘fatha’ (/) case marker on the object (as mentioned in 2.4.2.1.2), so as to differentiate it from the nominative subject, object Topic structures are different in that they require the object to take on nominative ‘damma’ (’) case marker. Reconsider the Focus sentence in (2.60b) restated again in (2.68) as a contrastive focus example and reconsider the Topic sentence in (2.65) restated again in (2.69) as a contrastive topic example.

(2.68) [CF bait/] bana_ al-ab' wa laysa qasr/. (OAVS)

house-ACC built-Ø DEF-father-NOM and not castle -ACC

It was a house, not a castle that the father built.

(2.69) [CT al-talib'] madah-hu al-mu'allim'. (ONVS)

DEF- student-NOM praised-3PS DEF-teacher-NOM

The student, the teacher praised him.

In addition to the different case markers between an object Topic, which assumes a nominative case marker, and the subject Focus, which maintains its original nominative case marker, an obligatory pronoun attaches⁵³ to the verb that refers to the object Topic and agrees with its characteristics, such as gender and number (Farghel, 1992). Hence, unlike the focus sentence which does not require any obligatory pronoun to be attached to the verb (as mentioned earlier see 2.4.2.1.2), it is necessary in the Topic sentence to have a pronoun attached to the verb that refers to CT. Consider example (2.48), which has been restated in (2.70a) as an example of a Topic sentence that has an attached pronoun.

(2.70) a. [Topic [CT al- mudarissa']] [Comment madaht-ha [F al-mudīrah']]. (ONVS)

DEF-teacher-NOM praised-3PS DEF- principal-NOM

The teacher, the principal praised her.

⁵³ In morphology, the attached pronoun is called Clitics, which is a morpheme that has syntactic features but relies on another word. For more detail about Clitics, see Gerlach (2000) and Kechagias (2011).

b. # [Topic [CT al-mudarissah'] [Comment madah [F al-mudirah']]. (# ONVS)

DEF- teacher-NOM praised-ø DEF- principal-NOM

The teacher, the principal praised her.

Interestingly here, how can we also differentiate between subject Focus and subject Topic since both has the same case marker that is a nominative case marker (')? The unique difference between the subject Topic and subject Focus is that, in the subject Topic utterance there is a separated pronoun which may come either before or after the verb (Ryding, 2005). This separated pronoun is unattached to the verb; however, it refers to the subject Topic and agrees with its characteristics. Reconsider Arabic contrastive focus sentence in (2.59) restated here in (2.71) to show the difference between CF (see example 2.71a) and CT (see example 2.71b).

(2.71) a. $[\text{CF wald}']$ hadar. (CF)

Ø- boy-NOM came

A boy came.

b. [CT aL- wald'] hwa hadar. (CT)

DEF- boy-NOM 3PS came

The boy, he came.

It is clear in the example (2.71b), the separated (unattached) pronoun ‘he’ (hwa) comes before the verb and refers to the subject Topic (the boy).

Furthermore, to avoid the ambiguity between the Topic and Focus, another grammatical structure must be enacted to cope with the IS conditions is the necessity for the Topic noun

phrase (whether it is fronted subject or fronted object) to be definite (Bakir, 1979, p. 62). This condition on the grammar of Topics is extremely general, if not universal⁵⁴. In English, it is impossible for the Topic to be an indefinite noun phrase. Hence, we could not state something like, # “as for a car, Isaac drove it.” This is due to the pragmatic function of the Topic that indicates what the sentence is about (as mentioned in 2.3.3 of this study). Hence, the above sentence presented in Arabic must be expressed as (2.72).

(2.72)

al-sayyarah’ saqa-ha Isaac’.

DEF- car-NOM drove-3PS Isaac-NOM

The car, Isaac drove it.

Additionally, another grammatical structure is the ‘amma... fa’ construction which is often associated with Topic-Comment structures (whether the Topic is subject or object) and is never associated with Focus (Farghel, 1992; Ryding, 2005). This construction consists of two conjunctions; the first conjunction is ‘amma’ (as for) followed by the Topic noun phrase (Wehr and Cowan, 1994) and the second one is the prefix ‘fa’ (‘then’ or the comma that shows the end of the clause) comes before the Comment that follows (Haywood and Nahmad, 1965). There are no grammatical variations between a generic Topic-Comment and whether it is being associated with ‘amma... fa’ construction; the only difference in marking is the presence of these two conjunctions. Classical Arabic grammar sees this device ‘amma... fa’ as ‘strengthening’ the Topic (Wehr and Cowan, 1994). It appears to me that these two

⁵⁴ However, there are some exceptional cases in Arabic that ‘Topic’ can be indefinite. See Al- Sweel (1983, p. 20-30) for more discussion about ‘al-mubtada’ (Topic).

conjunctions make the Topic more marked, prominent and easy to define, much like the utilise of an ‘as for’ Topic device in English (as noted earlier in 2.3.3); see example 2.73a and 2.73b.

(2.73)

a. [Topic al- walad’] [Comment daraba-hu al-abb’].

DEF- walad-NOM beat-3PS DEF- father-NOM

The boy, the father beat him.

b. [Topic amma al- walad’] [Comment fa daraba-hu al-abb’].

as for DEF- Walad-NOM , beat-him(3PS)DEF-father-NOM

As for the boy, the father beat him.

Many researchers such as Haywood and Nahmad (1965) argue that what comes after the ‘amma’ conjunction must be a nominative phrase and take a nominative case marker (’). Other researchers, for instance, Bakir (1979) and Farghal (1992) do not give any proof in contradiction to this statement. Nevertheless, while it seems true that this is the case for modern slandered Arabic, it is interesting to mention that the holy Qurān (classical Arabic) presents opposite examples. One of the Qurān’s passages ‘al-duha’ (Surah 93, p. 596) has two sequential verses using the ‘amm...fa’ device, however, none of them is followed by a noun phrase (Topic) that carries a nominative case marker (Yusuf Ali, 2004). In addition to that, the verb, which comes after the Topic, does not include a pronoun that shows the agreement to the Topic. The examples of the two vases (verse 9 and verses 10) ‘al-duha’ passage are demonstrated below in example (2.74) and example (2.75).

(2.74) fa- amma al-yatīm/ fa- lā taqhar -ø. (verse 9)

as for DEF-orphan-ACC then do not subjugate-ø

As for the orphan, do not subjugate him.

(2.75) wa-amma al- sāil/ fa-lā tanhar-ø. (verse 10)

and as for DEF-beggar-ACC then do not rebuff-ø

As for the beggar, do not rebuff him.

One potential explanation of these facts is that these two sentences are not considered to be Topic structures at all, they are an odd kind of Focus structures. The grammatical marking of the two sentences copes with the object Focus structures (except for ‘the amma...fa’). Also, the noun ‘orphan’ is an active constituent in the context that has been stated before these verses (particularly in verse 6) which proves that these two verses are types of Focus structure. On top of these reasons, all other studies (i.e., Parkinson, 1981; El-Yasin, 1985; Owens, 1988) show the only use of the ‘amma...fa’ device is with Topic structures and cannot be used with anything else. It would seem, then, that the Qurān may sometimes vary from modern standard Arabic⁵⁵ in relation to the case marking of ‘amma...fa’ structures, possibly because of its rhetorical style and semi-poetic nature.

To sum up, unlike Focus structures (see 2.4.2.1.2), Topic structures are unique in that they demand four important grammatical features to cope with the IS conditions: First, they demand the noun (whether it is a fronted subject or a fronted object) to take a nominative case marker.

⁵⁵ In this study, we focus on modern Arabic not classical Arabic.

Second, the topicalised constituent in a sentence should be definite. Third, an obligatory pronoun, which refers to the topicalised constituent, must be attached to the verb if the Topic is an object and an unattached pronoun must be added either before or after the verb if the Topic is a subject. Finally, most of topicalised constituents in Arabic sentences associate with the ‘amma...fa’ construction in order to strengthen the Topic. All the differences between Topic and Focus are summarised in table (2.1) and table (2.1) below.

Table 2.1: The difference between Subject Focus and Subject Topic.

Subject Contrastive Focus and Contrastive Topic	
Subject CF	Subject CT
It maintains its original nominative case marker.	It maintains its original nominative case marker.
It can be definite or indefinite.	It should be definite.
Nothing is added to the verb.	An unattached pronoun is added either before or after the verb.
It is not associated with the ‘amma...fa’ construction.	It is often associated with the ‘amma...fa’ construction to refer to the Topic.

Table 2.2: The difference between Object Focus and Object Topic.

Object Contrastive Focus and Contrastive Topic	
Object CF	Object CT
It maintains its original accusative case marker.	It changes its accusative case marker to a nominative case marker.
It can be definite or indefinite.	It should be definite.
Nothing is added to the verb.	An attached pronoun is added to the verb
It is not associated with the ‘amma...fa’ construction.	It is often associated with the ‘amma...fa’ construction to refer to the Topic.

2.4.3 Similarities and Differences Between Syntactic Strategies Employed by Arabic and English to Mark IS

English and Arabic share some similar communicative IS functions. For example, in both languages, the CF⁵⁶ and CT⁵⁷ carry different pragmatic meanings, such as correcting or emphasising. Furthermore, both languages share some basic IS rules, such as Given information before New information, and both appear to allow the initial position in a sentence for contrast.

⁵⁶ See Kiss (1998) for more details about CF in English; see Moutoakil (1989) for more details about CF in Arabic.

⁵⁷ See Callies (2009) for more details about CT in English; see Khalil (2000) and Aoun et al. (2009, Ch.8) for more details about CT in Arabic.

There are also some key differences between the pragmalinguistic structures in English and Arabic:

First, Arabic uses word order inversions and syntactic constructions to mark different pragmatic meanings. English, in contrast, uses syntactic means including preposing and different kinds of clefts (Khalil, 2000).

Second, Arabic has a rich inflectional system that allows for a large variety of word order inversions, such as OV, SOV and VOS. This mobility of sentence elements allows writers/speakers to play with language structures to achieve the intended pragmatic goals. Conversely, English has a very limited inflectional system; this system places heavy constraints on word order inversions. For example, preposing has strict conditions since English exhibits a fairly rigid SV(O) word order.

Third, English native speakers prefer to use different kinds of clefts rather than preposing since clefted structures have less restrictions (Doherty, 1999). Arabic speakers, on the other hand, prefer to use word order permutations because of Arabic's rich inflectional system (see 2.3.1.4.2 and 2.4.2).

The communicative functions of IS are somewhat similar in English and Arabic. In Arabic, however, the mobility of sentence elements allows writers/speakers to use a variety of non-canonical word orders and different syntactic constructions to carry pragmatic meanings. This is not the case in English, where rigid constraints on word order inversions only allow speakers/writers to use syntactic constructions, and even these have restrictions.

2.4.5 Summary

It has been argued that information structure is an area of linguistic research with the most overlapping, diverse and confusing notions (Levinson,1983). What these previous research have in common, however, is the idea that the description of an utterance or a sentence can be divided into two parts; the first part contains Given information (alternatively termed Theme, Topic or Presupposition) that relates to the preceding context, and the second part contributes New information to the context (Rheme, Comment, or Focus). Cross-linguistically, the organisation of information in context follows the IS principle that Given information is followed by New information (Biber et al. 1999, p. 896). Given information, typically appears first, but this is not a fixed principle. The most important factor is Given information should be recoverable from the discourse, either directly or indirectly (via inferences). New information is not recoverable from the preceding context and often receives prominence and comes at the end of a sentence, i.e., end-focus.

This principle of IS seems psycholinguistically and psychologically feasible, since Given information normally helps the speaker or the writer process New information (Clark,1977). It facilitates both the writer/speaker's planning process and the reader/hearer's understanding, consequently developing the overall cohesion of the context (Féry, 2006).

IS is associated with three essential features; Focus, Given and Topic. Focus is the most prominent constituent in discourse that has not been formerly mentioned (Halliday, 1967b). It has been divided into two types: Information Focus (IF), which is used to realise the right answer that corresponds to a wh question (Lambrecht, 1994), and Contrastive Focus (CF), which is used to specify information among other alternatives (Kiss, 1998; Féry, 2007). In addition, Focus involves syntactic devices, such as preposing, in which a canonically postverbal phrasal element appears in a preverbal place (Birner and Ward, 1998, p. 31), and

clefts, which split a sentence into two clauses in order to focus on a certain sentence element (Callies, 2009, p. 40). These Focus constructions carry additional pragmatic characteristics in discourse such as contrastiveness and clarification. In English, however, the contextual use of preposing is more restricted than the use of clefts.

Second, Given is old information that relates to previous information in a discourse (as mentioned earlier). Given is associated with some sort of means that indicate to the reader/listener that there is Given information in the context, such as with pronouns and deleted grammar.

Third, Topic is widely viewed as one of the most complex overlapping terms in IS because it involves two meanings: first, Topic carries Given information and second it indicates what the clause is referencing—also known as the concept of ‘aboutness’—and carries different communicative needs, such as correcting or emphasising.

It is feasible to accept that information structure is a level of representation that exists in all human languages. However, the way IS is encoded, and the explicit linguistic devices used to express pragmatic functions differ across different languages (Foley, 1994). English and Arabic have the same communicative functions of IS and share some basic IS rules, but each language has its own ways of realising the pragmatic functions of IS. Arabic has free word order, so information can easily be organised and focused by moving it into first position within a sentence. In contrast, English word order is rigid, with preposing being highly restricted contextually. Therefore, it seems plausible that the reasons for different linguistic structures between Arabic and English can be traced back to the (in-)flexibility of the canonical word order patterns in the two languages.

On the basis of a comparison between Arabic IS and English IS, we can anticipate that Arabic learners of English will not face any particular challenge in grasping the basic rules of IS, such as ‘Given first’ and ‘Focus last’, since these principles are common to both languages. On the other hand, they might face a challenge in using those syntactic constructions to encode IS that are different in each language. For example, they may have difficulty in learning preposing because, unlike Arabic, it is highly constrained in English. They may also struggle to learn clefted structures because they are rarely used in Arabic. However, they might find clefted structures easier to learn than preposing due to the simplicity of the rules of clefts in English.

Chapter Three: Pragmatics and Information Structure in Second Language Teaching and Learning

Although the organising of discourse constituents using specified syntactic means to achieve IS is a potential learning barrier for even proficient second language learners, the interaction of pragmalinguistic competence and discourse organisation is not sufficiently studied in L2 studies (Callies and Keller, 2008). This chapter first demonstrates the pragmatic competence within SLA research. It will then discuss the interplay of pragmatics and syntax in SLA, including several empirical studies on the syntactic constructions used to achieve IS.

After briefly examining the two important approaches that utilise linguistic universals to interpret SLA phenomena, this chapter demonstrates how the integration of language transfer and typological markedness can be applied to make explanations and predictions as to both the difficulty and order of syntactic characteristics in the acquisition process. Finally, it sheds light on ESL teaching methods that raise learners' awareness about English pragmalinguistic structures and help them build stable knowledge about these structures.

3.1 Pragmatics in SLA

Pragmatics is seen generally as comprising two aspects: one pragmalinguistic and the other sociopragmatic. The pragmalinguistic aspect is concerned with a language from the view of structural resources, whereas sociopragmatic studies investigate the circumstances of language use which extract from the cultural context (Crystal, 1997). The pragmalinguistic aspect relates to the structural linguistic resources from which writers or speakers can select when using

language in a specific social situation while the sociopragmatic aspect refers to the cultural context of language use. According to Dippold (2008), pragmatics is realised as knowledge of forms and methods to carry appropriate illocutions (i.e., pragmalinguistic competence) and knowledge of the use of these forms and methods in a correct discourse (i.e., sociopragmatic competence).

The search domain that explores the relationship between grammar and discourse is also common as discourse pragmatics. Hence, it is feasible that this study falls within the area of linguistic pragmatics.

The study of pragmatics in SLA is commonly referred to as Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP). ILP has broadly been shaped on cultural pragmatics, adapting its theories and methods (Kasper, 1995). ILP has generally been connected with cultural setting by exploring L2 learners' production and comprehension of speech acts (e.g., apologies, complains, refusals and requests) as well as their use of semantic formulae (e.g., lexical downgraders⁵⁸ or discourse markers).

ILP is predominantly determined as 'the study of non-native speakers' acquisition of a second language pragmatic competence and use' (Kasper & Rose, 1999, p. 80) or 'the study of non-native speakers' comprehension, production, and acquisition of linguistic action in a second language' (Kasper, 1995, p. 15).

⁵⁸ For more information about internal modifiers (lexical upgraders and downgraders); see House and Kasper (1987).

It is clear that in these two definitions, the area of ILP study is not only concerned with cultural pragmatics, however, both definitions utilise the terms of ‘L2 pragmatic knowledge’ and ‘linguistic action in L2’ which relate to the research domain of inquiry.

There are many studies that show the importance of sociopragmatic terms and pragmalinguistic terms of communication for both teachers and learners because both components have to be studied in teaching or learning a language (Trosborg, 2010). In order for L2 learners to be pragmatically competent, they must be able to use their L2 under the constraints of communication and incorporate their sociopragmatic knowledge on pragmalinguistic forms (Roever, 2004; McNamara & Roever, 2006; Trosborg, 2010). As Liu (2004) mentions, any failure in L2 learners’ comprehension and production in any language use would result communication breakdown or pragmatic failure. According to Liu (2004), sociopragmatic failure results from a deficiency of sociocultural competence and ‘various cultural concepts of appropriate linguistics forms’, while pragmalinguistic failure connects with a linguistic lack ‘caused by variations in the linguistic constructions of discourse pragmatics’ (ibid., p. 16). In order to successfully use pragmatic aspects in a L2, learners should learn sociopragmatic as well as pragmalinguistic aspects of a second language use. Nevertheless, as Yates (2010) states, these two constituents cannot be taught except that L2 teachers consciously know how these aspects of communication are understood in different discourses of language use.

In general terms, the concept of linguistic competence in L2 knowledge contains both competence in a language’s grammar and its use according to its sociocultural rules. This is different from the Chomskian sense of linguistic competence, which sets aside contextual factors of language use and only includes grammatical knowledge (Hymes, 1972). Canale (1983) proposed a model of pragmalinguistic competence in L2 contains four main elements:

- 1) grammatical competence, which is the ability to understand the language rule, such as vocabulary, spelling, syntax, morphology and the rules of phonology, in order to produce well-formed sentences;
- 2) sociolinguistic competence, which is the ability to understand and correctly use a language in various sociolinguistic contexts, with particular attention to suitability of both forms and meanings;
- 3) discourse competence, which is the knowledge of how to interpret and incorporate meanings and grammatical forms to attain combined texts in various modes by utilising coherence rules and cohesion means; and
- 4) strategic competence, which is the knowledge of the verbal and non-verbal strategies utilised to improve the rhetorical impact of utterances and to compensate for breakdowns in communication.

Though Canale's (1983) model of pragmalinguistic competence in L2 separately presents the previous four elements, it should be made clear that none of these elements stands alone but they all interact with each other to form the target language. Though these four elements are useful in pragmatic competence, Canale (1983) does not take a pragmatic perspective to IS in his model. Later, Archibald's (1994, p. 59f) model of L2 pragmatic competence, which relies on Canale's (1983) model, adds a fifth element,

- 5) information structure, which is the knowledge of thematic structure and the ordering of given information before new information in discourse.

Although Archibald (1994) explicitly refers to IS in his model, he nevertheless discards the pragmatic use of IS. More recently, Barron (2003, p. 10) defines L2 pragmatic competence as

‘knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts, knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a second language for realising certain illocutions, and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages’ linguistic resources.’

Although this definition gives a valuable distinction between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge, it focuses around the term ‘speech act’, hence reflecting the trend in ILP, narrowing down the range of pragmatic competence to focus on the area of speech acts.

Alternatively, I suggest the following definition of L2 pragmalinguistic knowledge:

Learners’ knowledge of the linguistic structures in a second language and their ability to use these structures in different contexts.

More precisely, Callies (2009, p. 83) describes pragmalinguistic knowledge as:

‘a component of L2 pragmatic competence which concerns with learners’ knowledge of the syntactic resources available in a target language for realising certain communication effects, and also knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of these resources.’

The combination of Canale’s (1983) and Archibald’s (1994) model of L2 pragmalinguistic competence and Barron’s (2003) definition of L2 pragmatic competence, largely appears quite suitable to give reasons for the complicated nature of L2 pragmatic knowledge which is placed on the syntax-pragmatics interface.

The definitions of ILP above obviously includes more than the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. IS functions in discourse and the use of its syntactic constructions in different social contexts to serve pragmatic functions, such as contrast and clarification, obviously link to pragmatic competence in a L2. Therefore, this research falls into the scope of ILP, since it intends to explore learners’ competence of second language linguistic resources and their ability to utilise them in an appropriate context. Nevertheless, it is striking that, to my knowledge, there are only rare empirical studies that investigate the importance of a second

language pragmalinguistic competence. The field of request in ILP should be expanded beyond the cultural examination of speech acts.

Studying the use of syntactic constructions to package information in a context is important with respect to the interrelation of pragmalinguistic and grammatical abilities in a second language acquisition, an essential issue in recent ILP studies. The majority of studies in this field treated pragmatic competence as a separate element, and hence, studied grammatical competence as an independent element (Kasper and Rose 2002, p. 163). These studies proposed that the development of pragmatic knowledge has to be seen as independent of the development of grammatical knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper and Rose, 2002) as long as ‘advanced levels of grammatical knowledge do not guarantee concomitant advanced levels of pragmatic knowledge’ (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, p. 686).

Kasper (2001, p. 506) and Kasper and Rose (2002, p.147) outline the previous studies’ results on the relation between grammatical and interlanguage pragmatic development which has directed into two important perspectives: 1) pragmatics precedes grammar because learners use L2 pragmatic functions before they acquire the L2 grammatical forms that are acceptable realisations of those functions; and 2) grammar precedes pragmatics because learners acquire L2 grammatical forms before they acquire their pragmalinguistic functions.

In support of the first view, Kasper and Rose (2002) give the ‘universal pragmatics principle’ to second language acquisition. A constant idea in traditional teaching of second language is that in order to be able to successfully engage in a L2 with respect to (socio)pragmatics, students first should have a strong competence of the second language grammar. Nevertheless, the universal pragmatics principle mentions that in contrast to children in L1 acquisition, L2 learners are commonly pragmatically efficient in their L1, thus they transfer a universal pragmatic competence of their L1 to the task of L2 learning (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p. 164). Furthermore, studies into the early levels of SLA have found that L2 learners shift from a

pragmatic mode through a system of acquisitional grammaticalisation or syntacticisation to a syntactic mode.

The grammar-precedes-pragmatics view comes in three modes (see Kasper and Rose, 2002, p. 174ff.):

- 1) grammatical competence does not facilitate pragmalinguistic use (e.g., learners' (non-) use of modal verbs in mitigating disagreement);
- 2) grammatical competence facilitates non-target-like pragmalinguistic use (e.g., the overuse of actually and I think); and
- 3) grammatical and pragmalinguistic competence facilitate non-target-like sociopragmatic use (e.g., learners' use of information questions as indirect strategies in a number of contexts and kinds of speech acts in which more transparent strategies would be more efficient).

Previous studies show differences in the pragmalinguistic development of learners at different levels in the second language learning process, but the accurate correlation between pragmatic and grammatical competence in a second language remains unclear due to the scarcity of research that investigates this relationship.

3.1.1 The Pragma-Syntax Interference in SLA

In a study on the pragmalinguistic development of native and non-native English speakers, Trillo (2002) claims that L2 learners follow binary paths in their linguistic competence: a pragmatic path and a formal path. The pragmatic path relates to the use of language in different situations, and the formal path refers to the acquisition of the grammatical, phonological and

lexical characteristics of the language. Native speakers of a language improve both paths simultaneously through natural acquisition, while L2 learners develop both paths through formal classroom instructions. Trillo (2002) argues that pragmatic development demands a natural context that is almost impossible to create in classroom setting (educational syllabi) because pragmatic competence is connected to the sociocultural and cognitive meanings expressed by the language forms. Trillo's (2002) argumentation is essential in the study of linguistic development, as he clearly shows that native speakers in language acquisition follow a 'function-to- form'⁵⁹ process while L2 learners follow a 'form- to- function' process.

Similar to Trillo (2002), Bos, Hollebrandse and Sleeman (2004) claim that the process of language acquisition is not simply about learning different modules of L2 such as semantics, syntax, morphology and phonology, which have individual functional and structural properties; they argue it also consists of learning the interaction between these subjects and pragmatic competence⁶⁰. These interactional systems in language acquisition are commonly seen as interface relations. This study is primarily interested in how the pragmatic system connects with the units of the grammars, i.e., the pragmatic-syntax interface.

As stated by Bos, Hollebrandse and Sleeman (2004), the pragmatic-syntax interface includes three components:

- 1- the pragmatic system, which includes information about essential notions of IS such as Given, Focus and Topic;
- 2- the grammar system, which includes movement rules and language structures; and

⁵⁹ In a function-to- form approach, language (forms and functions) develops through a natural context; in a form-to-function approach, language develops through traditional learning methods that focus on language's forms separately from their functions (for more details, see 3.5 of this study).

⁶⁰ For more discussion about the interaction between modules and pragmatics, see Maibauer (1999).

- 3- a group of rules that specify how information from the pragmatic system is expressed into the grammar system and vice versa.

Moreover, they argue that, while the majority of the pragmatic aspects may be universal, the syntactic devices for presenting these aspects are to some degree language-specific. In the mother language, the process of language acquisition interacts simultaneously because of the naturalistic environment, whereas L2 develops alongside the pragmatic system that has already been acquired from the mother language. L2 learners have to discover the specific form-function mapping rules that are most essential and common in the target language. The question here is how this interaction/ interface between the first language's pragmatic knowledge and the second language's grammatical module is acquired.

Form-function mapping rules are typically language specific. For example, in informal French, Topic is placed in either a right or left dislocation position, but formal French only allows for the right dislocation position (Bos, Hollebrandse and Sleeman, 2004), as is shown in examples (3.1) and (3.2).

(3.1) Ils sont courageux, [Topics ces lesenfants].

They are courageous, those children. (right dislocation)

(3.2) [Topics Ces lesenfants], ils sont courageux.

Those children, they are courageous. (left dislocation)

Also important is the relation of these language specific rules from L1 to L2, which makes these interface relations further sophisticated. For instance, as illustrated in chapter two of this

thesis, Focus can be achieved in English through preposing or clefts. Preposing is highly constrained, but clefts are less constrained and are therefore the preferred option. In contrast, the preferred choice in Arabic is preposing; although Focus can also be expressed in Arabic through clefts, these devices are rarely used (see 2.4.2.1.2 of this study).

Consequently, the way in which languages differ in accordance with the pragmatic-syntax interface depends on a) differences in the language-specific mapping rules from the functional components to the syntactical components and b) the relation of these rules in one language to the rules in another language.

In sum, L2 learners have to discover a) which forms are used to realise which functions in the target language and b) the relationship between the language-specific rules L1 and the L2 rules. As to the acquisition of language-specific rules, L2 learners have to either learn new rules that connect information from the pragmatic system to the L2 grammatical system or reformulate the rules from their mother language to their target language.

Sleeman (2004) notices that it seems to be easier for L2 learners to acquire a new and obligatory rule in a second language than an optional rule and made a comparison using the acquisition and use of French syntactic devices (dislocation, ‘c’est-cleft’ and ‘il y a-cleft’) by Dutch L2 learners of French. Her study examines syntax-pragmatics interface phenomena that link certain pragmatic functions (Topic in dislocation and Focus in cleft devices) with certain syntactic means. In French, there are two kinds of clefts: the ‘c’est-cleft’, which conveys contrastive meaning, and the ‘il y a-cleft’, which has presentational value. In contrast, clefts are rarely utilised in Dutch, so positive transfer⁶¹ of this rule is possible. In addition, French also regularly utilises dislocations to mark Topic, but the rules vary in relation to formal and

⁶¹ For more detail about language transfer, see 3.3.2 of this study.

informal French. In both formal and colloquial French, it is possible to place Topic in the canonical subject position, but dislocation is the preferred choice in colloquial speech. Although Dutch also has dislocation, thus enabling positive transfer, this transfer only occurs to formal French, as this is the standard form in French classrooms.

Sleeman's (2004) study demonstrates that Dutch learners of French must adapt with several difficulties: (1) for the 'c'est-cleft', they have to acquire a new rule, since the pragmatic meaning of contrastiveness in French is achieved by the 'c'est-cleft', which is hardly utilised in Dutch; (2) for the 'il y a-cleft', they also need to learn a new interface rule, since the 'il y a-cleft' does not exist in Dutch; (3) for dislocation, they need to learn a) the interface rule which places the Topic onto dislocations and canonical NP-VP sequences and b) the relation of this rule between both (formal and informal) Dutch and French in comparison with the canonical NP-VP position.

Sleeman (2004) claims that obligatory pragmatic-syntactic interface relations such as the 'c'est-cleft' are more easily acquired by L2 students than optional ones, i.e., the 'il y a-cleft'. Sleeman's (2004) results suggest Dutch learners seem to have extreme difficulties in acquiring the dislocation device instead of utilising a standard NP-VP sequence for the Topic. She also argues that Dutch learners learn the 'c'est-cleft' in the classroom setting because it is obligatory and is utilised in written language, but they do not learn dislocation in the same setting because it is optional (elective) and is typically used in spoken language. She argues that L2 students should be exposed to native French speech in order to build their awareness about the common principles of spoken French.

In the early levels of L2 acquisition, the sequencing of discourse types is directed by universal IS principles such as 'Topic first' and 'Focus last' which are commonly known as pragmatic

constraints. These pragmatic constraints may clash, however, with different communicative situations and discourse contexts that push the L2 learner beyond the basic level of acquisition and demand extension and reorganisation. Klein and Perdue (1997) claim that L2 learners at this level start easing the constraints and advance beyond the primary stage by utilising certain constructions and grammatical principles of IS in the second language such as Focus constructions (i.e., passive, clefts and preposing).

3.2 The study- IS Interface in SLA

3.2.1 IS in Early and Advanced Second Language Acquisition

The role of discourse pragmatics in both advanced and early levels of acquisition has been addressed with increasing interest in second language acquisition research. Numerous studies have clearly shown that IS is an important element in SLA dynamics in particular (Dimroth and Starren, 2003). These studies adopt two approaches: the functional approach, understanding the role of both IS and syntax in discourse; and the typological approach, which is a type of empirical and methodological interpretation that intends to find linguistic patterns (universal patterns) across languages⁶²(Croft, 2003). These two approaches seem to be particularly relevant in early L2 acquisition. Givón (1984) adopts the functional-typological approach to SLA which implements a unified theory of all forms of language change. He argues that speaker and linguistic systems move from a pre-syntactic, pragmatic system of communication to a syntactic system (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). In the pre-syntactic mode, word order is essentially guided by pragmatic principles of IS, such as the occurrence of Topic-

⁶² For more details about the functional-typological approach, see 3.3.2 of this study.

Comment structures. In the syntactic mode, the syntactic structures of the second language are influenced by the pragmatic characteristics of the L1, which are IS functions. This process of language acquisition governs all early stages of L2 language development.

Klein and Perdue (1992) offer another important study that demonstrates the significance of basic pragmatic functions of IS in SLA. They provide a comparative analysis of SLA from a cross-linguistic perspective, including 40 case studies of L2 students from different backgrounds, and suggest that IS plays an essential role in the linearization of students' sentences into the so-called 'linguistic universals' or 'basic variety'. It seems that, in the early stage of a second language acquisition, the sequencing of discourse components is directed by universal IS principles that operate independently of the specifics of the mother language or the target language.

In the 'basic variety', IS precedes the acquisition of grammar rules and is based on specific form-function mapping rules. Klein and Perdue (1992, p. 49) identify semantic, phrasal and pragmatic constraints that affect such form-function mapping rules. Semantic constraints connect with the thematic roles of the participants and with the degree of control that a noun phrase referent with a particular semantic role may have over other noun phrase referents (i.e., the noun phrase that has a higher level of control over the other noun phrase referents in a sentence appears in the subject position and is acquired first). Phrasal constraints demonstrate the patterns in which elements may happen (e.g., a long constituent appears at the end of a sentence) and pragmatic constraints (e.g., 'Topic before Focus'; Topic is mapped onto the subject noun phrase and Focus is mapping onto verb phrase). Their findings implicate that, in a second language setting, learners do not acquire some basic pragmatic and semantic aspects because they are expressed in the earliest stage of L2 production. What is lacking in the early level of interlanguage, nevertheless, are the syntactic, lexico-grammatical and phonological

constructions of information structure. It is clear that the sequencing of discourse elements is directed by universal IS principles that are already present in both the L1 or L2 languages, particularly in the early levels of second language acquisition.

In the advanced levels of SLA, several studies have shown the importance of IS and the influence of L1 pragmatic structures on L2 acquisition by investigating the two discourse structures in SLA: Topic vs./subject prominence and grammar vs. pragmatic word order. These studies (i.e., Thompson, 1978; Givón, 1984; Jung, 2004) have resulted in two contrary claims on role of the topic/subject prominence continuum in second language acquisition:

- 1- regardless of the first language, the process of L2 acquisition is characterised by an early universal topic/subject prominence that is not transferable; or
- 2- learners' first language has an impact on the acquisition of a second language and as their L2 improves, native speakers of a topic prominent language gradually increase their use of subject prominent characteristics in their target language production.

Rutherford (1983) offers significant study that examines the contrast between a grammatical word order (GWO) language, such as SVO, and a pragmatic word order (PWO) language, such as OSV, in SLA. Rutherford investigates written productions by Korean, Japanese and Spanish learners and concerned with the impact of the two typological parameters stated earlier. He examines how Korean and Japanese learners transferred pragmatic structures from their L1 to L2, such as pragmatic word order (OVS) and topic prominence, rather than using basic word order. He believes this was the result of the influence of their first language's word order. He further finds a gradual transfer in the use of subject prominence as the learners' proficiency in

the target language increased. As a result, he suggests that contextual typological principles, not syntax, direct the growth of a target language.

Similar to earlier studies (i.e., Rutherford, 1983), Jung (2004) investigates the use of subject/topic prominence in English learners of Korean. She notices that students at early levels of learning tended to shift subject prominent characteristics to the L2 (Korean). However, as their L2 proficiency improved, they increasingly used topic prominent (L2 pragmalinguistic functions) characteristics such as the use of topic markers, the dropping of objects and subjects and a drop in the use of subject prominent characteristics (L1 pragmalinguistic functions). Jung's (2004) findings do not support universal IS principles in SLA but rather give further evidence for the argument that L2 learners shift their first language characteristics to the second language and that with further L2 development, they gradually become sensitive to unique features of the L2.

More recent studies have re-investigated the influence of first language topic prominence on the acquisition of the target language. Green et al. (2000) examine Chinese learners' use of topic means (i.e., according to, and for) and the use of logical connectors (i.e., moreover, in addition to, furthermore). They compare their academic English writing with that of native English speakers and found that Chinese learners use connectors in the theme position to introduce new information more often than native speakers do. However, the results are less clear for topic-front constructions. They hypothesise that the second language output is mostly influenced by the discourse and pragmatic features of the first language and conclude the following:

‘Chinese students break the given-new progression too frequently and unintentionally by using theme position to introduce new information rather than to retain given-new sequencing of information, to present a contrast to what has gone before, or to introduce a new topical referent. The usurpation of theme position leads to the appearance of an uncommonly large number of

marked themes which, in turn, gives rise to writing which is overly emphatic in tone at best and which, at worst, lacks the smooth logical development of theme which characterises coherent writing.’ (ibid., p.110)

A limited number of studies demonstrate that advanced L2 learners frequently face problems in attaining a target, like IS, and that IS is a sensitive area for them. Schachter and Rutherford (1979) argue that the first problem that IL learners face in SLA is the overproduction of some syntactic constructions used to achieve IS due to pragmatic L1 features. They investigate Chinese and Japanese learners of English, whose native languages are topic prominent. Errors in word orders were observed not to be syntactically provoked but rather could be referred to as context aspects. Schachter and Rutherford (1979) identify this as an overproduction of particular L2 structures, namely *it*-clefts, which have no equivalents in their L1 languages (Chinese and Japanese). They hypothesise that this overproduction is due to IS functions from the learners’ first languages; the learners transferred the first language function, topic prominent IS, to the L2 form (ibid., p. 10).

Another important problem IL learner face in SLA is the avoidance of using syntactic constructions due to unexpected similarities between the mother language and the target language. Plag (1994) investigates L2 pragmalinguistic structures in advanced German ESL learners. He examines how the learners realise ‘Given’ and ‘New’ information in L1 and L2 speaking production. Plag (1994) finds that, although the learners have a greater tendency to present ‘New’ referents in the ‘Comment’ place in their L1, these ‘New’ referents are nearly equally distributed between the ‘Topic’ and ‘Comment’ position in the L2, English. Thus, Plag (1994) hypothesises that the major reason for this L2- particular discourse sequencing is avoidance due to an unexpected similarity between the first and second language. He claims that although English and German display various word order patterns, they have one

functional area that has extreme similarities: the introduction of ‘New’ referents by utilising subject-verb inversion⁶³. While there is evidence that early and pre-intermediate German ESL learners always produce false inverted sentences, e.g., ‘*This pen has given you your mother’, in their L2 (Jordens, 1983, p. 347), evidence for the hypothesis that the L2-particular discourse sequencing is made by avoidance comes from Plag’s findings that advanced German students seem to have limited knowledge of syntactic means, such as clefts in English. He concludes

‘learners tend to avoid some syntactic means typical of their first language when they introduce new referents to the discourse, and utilise the ‘safe’ SVO pattern with a prototypical, agentive subject.’ (Plag, 1994, p. 42)

Similar to Plag (1994), Leube (2000) examines the use of IS principles in the spoken texts produced by 40 exceedingly advanced English learners of German, 20 of whom she categorises as near-native. The oral data were gathered from a pseudo-experimental situation in which the learners restated a children’s story from a picture book and explained the assembly of a toy. Leube observes variations in the texts produced by native German speakers and L2 German speakers and finds that ‘none of the learners were observed to structure instructional texts in the manner that German native speakers do’ (Leube, 2000, p. 181). Through further investigation, she also finds that ‘while the avoidance of using the pragmalinguistic functions of the target language leads to unclear communication, it also leads to texts with “style” problems’ (ibid., p. 182).

⁶³ Inversion is a syntactic device defined as ‘a sentence in which the logical subject appears in post-verbal position while some other constituents appear in pre-verbal position (initial position) of a clause’ (Birner, 1996, p. 17). These fronted constituents could be any phrases, such as a verb phrase (VP) or an adjective phrase (AdjP). However, this study is focused on the use of other syntactic constructions such as focus fronting, topic fronting and different kinds of clefts. Inversion and passive are topics of interest for future research.

Overall, IS plays an essential role in SLA, and the sequencing of discourse constituents of languages is guided by universal IS principles. In early stages of L2 acquisition, learners transfer L1 functions to L2, and in advanced stages of L2 acquisition, learners gradually develop the use of syntactic IS constructions in their L2 production. However, core IS principles remain a constant problem and a frequent barrier for second language learners.

3.2.2 IS-Related Syntactic Constructions

Empirical studies on syntactic constructions and marked word orders in English as a second language are sparse and have largely been concerned with the grammatical characteristics of syntactic means, neglecting the pragmatic characteristics of these constructions. Studies often adopt a functional approach in particular, and investigation into how different IS categories are syntactically realised are rare and virtually non-existent in relation to Arab learners of English in a Saudi context (as mentioned in 1.3).

Plag and Zimmermann (1998) examine inversion and focus fronting in German advanced learners of English completing judgment tasks enhanced by translation, error identifications, and the correction of unacceptable sentences. They find significant variations between native speakers and L2 learners, particularly that proficient L2 learners are not skilled in the nuanced grammatical restrictions of fronting and inversion as native speakers and notice that proficient L2 learners are not quite efficient as to the syntactical restrictions of focus fronting and inversion. According to the production data, L2 learners did not use syntactic constructions to achieve IS and preferred to use canonical word orders. If they used syntactic constructions, they tended to utilise focus fronting, not inversion.

Sleeman (2004) carries out another study in which he compares the use and acquisition of the dislocation, 'c'est-cleft', and 'il y a-cleft' of Dutch advanced learners of French in secondary schools. Her results also support earlier studies (i.e., Plag, 1994; Leube, 2000; Plag and Zimmermann, 1998) showing that, while L2 learners use appropriate syntactic devices to realise Foci or Topic in their L1, they avoid using these syntactic means in quantitatively in the target language.

It may be clear from earlier studies that advanced learners of L2 are not explicitly familiar with the syntactic constructions used to achieve IS, so L2 learners lack or overuse of syntactic constructions to realise discourse elements is due to a lack of confidence in or knowledge of these syntactic devices.

Boström Aronsson (2003) presents further support for this line of argumentation in her investigation into the use of wh- and it-clefts in the argumentative writings of Swedish advanced learners of English. She finds that the learners overused these devices in writing in comparison to native speakers. She claims that Swedish learners' overuse of clefts could be the result of many factors. First, clefts are frequently used in Swedish in comparison with English and simply transfer to the L2. Second, she finds that learners often utilise it-clefts in contexts where there is no overt need to realise or emphasise specific discourse elements. Finally, she hypothesises that L2 learners are not entirely aware of thematic meaning when writing in the target language because they seem to utilise these means without taking the sequencing of discourse elements into account.

Palacios-Martínez and Martínez-Insua (2006) examine Spanish ESL learners' use of Focus devices such as it-clefts through detailed analysis of their writing texts in comparison with native English speakers' writings. Their results show that Focus devices are overrepresented in

Spanish learners' writing due to different combined causes: these syntactic structures are presented early in formal classroom instructions and their communicative functions are similar in both languages (Spanish and English), thus enabling positive transfer. Not surprisingly, the learners have a smaller repertoire of verbs than native speakers. In addition, the learners often confuse 'it' and 'there' as dummy subjects⁶⁴.

Similarly, Hinkel (2002) examines the frequency of use of many language characteristics, such as the syntactic and lexical constructions used to achieve IS. She gives a detailed interpretation of L2 writers' texts and determined explicitly where their texts varied from those produced by native speakers of English (NSs). She carries out a corpus-based study of university student placement essays written by non-native speakers of English (NNSs) from six various L1 language backgrounds (Indonesian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese and Arabic) and compares them with those composed by American students in their first year of university study. She finds that, after various years of learning English, NNS writers' texts differ significantly from that of beginning NS writers. She argues that while both NNS and NS writers tend to utilise lexically and syntactically simple devices for IS, the frequency of these characteristics in NNSs' academic essays highly exceeded those found in NSs' academic writing. Hinkel (2002) concludes that 'L2 writers' accessible language base simply lacks the appropriate and varied vocabulary and syntactic arsenal available to NS students of similar academic standing' (ibid., p. 74).

Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) investigate the use of the inversion, passive, *wh*, *wh*- and *it*-clefts from an IS standpoint by NS and NNS scientists in both oral conference presentations and the resulting conference proceedings. NSs' and NNSs' writings differ in their

⁶⁴The dummy or empty subject (*it* or *that*) is used in a sentence when the real subject moves elsewhere in the clause—but not before the verb (see 2.3.1.4.2 for further details).

use of the syntactic constructions through which IS is realised. While NSs use it-clefts and passive more in writing, they appear to prefer *rwh*-, *wh*-clefts and inversion when speaking. In contrast, NNSs appear to overuse it-clefts and passive voice in speech, but they use *rwh*-clefts and *wh*-clefts noticeably less in this side. Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) argue that, while NNSs cannot differentiate strongly between the two sides, NSs can do so to a wider extent. They also find that NNSs lack knowledge of the functions of *wh*-clefts and it-clefts, particular when it comes to terms such as ‘information highlighting’ and ‘syntactic weight’ (Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas, 2005, p. 52.). These findings show that, while NS scientists manipulate syntactic devices in a contextually sensitive way, NNS scientists show much less syntactical adaptability to the information packaging prerequisites of discourse, especially in their oral presentations. Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) conclude that this may have a negative influence on the persuasiveness and rhetorical appropriateness of their discourse.

Lastly, Callies and Keller (2008) report on a study that aimed to investigate L2 learners’ use and awareness of English Focus constructions. In this study, a group of advanced German learners of English was asked to read literary texts abounding in Focus means, after which they were given numerous tasks assessing their ability and awareness to reproduce these constructions. The results show that even advanced L2 learners have only basic awareness of IS functions, and their awareness of Focus constructions is very low.

3.2.3 Summary

The results of research on the use of the pragmalinguistic structures in SLA can be summarised as follows:

1. There is a close interplay between typological characteristics of a language and its language-specific IS categories as well as the syntactic constructions utilised to encode information structure categories such as Topic or Focus.
2. L2 learners do not acquire some basic pragmatic aspects of IS such as ‘Topic first’ and ‘Focus last’, as the sequencing of these discourse types is considered a universal principle of IS (Klein and Perdue, 1992). What is lacking in their interlanguage, however, is the syntactic constructions, lexico-grammatical and phonological means of IS.
3. IS organisation is an essential but problematic part of the L2 competence of non-native speakers, and they face challenges in organising information in discourse in accordance with IS and in highlighting the most important constituents in a sentence and deemphasising the others using different syntactic structures of the target language.
4. Syntactic constructions of information organisation in the mother language may influence the target language acquisition in terms of overproduction/transfer (Boström Aronsson, 2003) or avoidance (Plag and Zimmermann, 1998).
5. Even at the advanced levels of SLA in which IL can be considered close to native speakers in many aspects, some fundamental IS principles typical of those found in the mother language of the learners are maintained, and differences can be associated with core principles of packaging information underlying IS (Carroll et al., 2000).

Previous studies have investigated how different IS categories are realised syntactically by L2 learners and have offered the following findings in relation to these learners:

1. They tend to overuse syntactic focusing constructions such as *it*- and *wh*-clefts (Boström Aronsson, 2003), which may be due to the frequent use of these structures in the learners' first language.
2. They often overuse linguistic devices of the information structure, as they may not be entirely aware of the thematic meaning of these structures in the target language.
3. They frequently avoid non-canonical word order structures and instead depend on canonical SVO word order. Although they use and rely heavily on syntactic devices to establish the foci or topic in their L1, they do not utilise these syntactic means quantitatively in the target language (Plag, 1994; Plag and Zimmermann, 1998; Leube, 2000; Sleeman, 2004).
4. They have limited awareness and knowledge of the contextual use and effects of the linguistic means of IS in the written and spoken mode of a target language (Hinkel, 2002; Boström Aronsson, 2003; Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas, 2005; Callies and Keller, 2008). For example, German learners of English are not fully competent in the appropriate use of marked structures, e.g., inversion, clefts and preposing (Plag, 1994), and this limited knowledge of the pragmalinguistic functions of the target language leads to unclear communication in their written and spoken English (Leube, 2000).

3.3 Language Universals, Language Transfer and Typological Markedness in SLA

This section compares two main approaches that employ linguistic universals to illustrate SLA phenomena. It focuses specifically on how the notions of language transfer and typological

markedness can be applied and examined to make predictions as to both the difficulty and order of syntactic characteristics in the process of acquisition.

3.3.1 Universal Grammar and Functional-Typological Approaches

Typological analysis contributes to second language research in general and to study of language transfer in particular in three ways: it provides a basis for estimating language distance, it encourages the study of transfer with regard to systematic influences and it allows for a clearer understanding of connections between developmental sequences and transfer (Odlin, 1989). Universal Grammar (UG) and the Functional-Typological Approach (FTA) are two different approaches that employ linguistic universals to interpret second language acquisition phenomena. Although both approaches demonstrate that specific implicational language universals found in mother languages will also hold for interlanguages (Eckman, 1988, p. 419), they vary significantly in some aspects.

UG approach to SLA is based on an in-depth structural interpretation of single languages to discover abstract UG rules. The connection between SLA and UG is cited by Mitchell and Myles (1998, p. 69), who state that UG ‘is not fundamentally a theory of second language learning. . . it is a theory of language which tends to explain and describe human language, and hence this theory is only indirectly relevant to SLA research’. UG is derived from introspective judgment which has not been empirically tested or applied (Gregg, 1994), so UG approach is theory-dependent to some extent, and only a small number of linguistic characteristics (often specific syntactic constructions) have been studied inside this framework. Consequently, the area of inquiry is relatively narrow (Gregg 1994, p. 3726; Odlin, 2003, p.461), and the usefulness of UG in illustrating the SLA process might be questioned, because ‘the vast

majority of the skills and knowledge involved in SLA fall outside the UG field' (Jordan, 2004, p. 256). Since the present study includes syntactic constructions that display a complex interaction between syntactic and pragmatic properties, a UG-based approach appears unlikely to be fruitful, despite the fact that clarification in terms of parameter-resetting may be possible in principle⁶⁵ (Callies, 2009).

Unlike UG-based approaches to SLA, the functional-typological approach studies chosen linguistic characteristics from an extensive variety of languages, with the universals being determined from a wide range of experimental data. It depends highly on Greenberg's (1974) hypothesis that language universals are identified based on cross-linguistic comparisons in an empirical way. At the surface level, the functional-typological approach connects with descriptive analysis, including few theoretical assumptions, and examines a wide range of linguistic systems, including semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic aspects. In contrast to the Chomskian framework that linguistic structures should be illustrated primarily in terms of formalism (as stated in 3.1), the functional-typological approach to SLA (see Eckman 1977, 1996, 2004a) attempts to investigate language structure regarding language function and supports the essential nature of communicative needs in the shaping of a language's formal properties (Giacalone Ramat, 2003, p. 2).

Language typologists assume that the findings and generalisations made by the functional-typological approach can likewise be applied to language acquisition and argue for the importance of universal (implicational) hierarchies for the explanation and prediction of (non) transfer in SLA. The fundamental assumption is that interlanguages are natural languages. If

⁶⁵ According to UG, all languages have the same principles, e.g., a sentence must always have a subject, even if it is not clearly apparent. However, languages can only vary within pre-set limits for a particular parameter, e.g., in determining whether or not the subject of a sentence must be overtly apparent. Consequently, UG approaches help explain parameter resetting.

typological language universals are universal to all natural human languages (i.e., all languages have Focus and Given), then they ought to likewise hold true for a second language, as is argued by the Interlanguage Structural Conformity Hypothesis (ISCH): ‘All universals that are valid for essential languages are also valid for interlanguages’ (Eckman, Moravcsik and Wirth, 1989, p. 195). It is feasible to accept that such hierarchical relations between linguistic phenomena ought to likewise be available in interlanguages because numerous language universals can be transferred in terms of (implicational) hierarchical relations regarding crosslinguistic/typological markedness. Therefore, it seems to be possible to anticipate linguistic characteristics in interlanguages by relying on their situation in the hierarchy and their relative level of typological markedness.

When utilised within the functional-typological approach, the term ‘typological markedness’ is viewed as an empirically motivated structure, designed based on cross-linguistic information (Eckman, 1996; Callies, 2008). The next section examines the importance of typological markedness in the prediction of the acquisition of syntactic structures and their (non)transferability and how this concept interplays with the concept of language transfer.

3.3.2 Typological Markedness and its Interaction with Language Transfer

The notion of markedness in second language acquisition is defined as syntactic patterns that diverge from canonical word orders and have additional pragmatic meanings in discourse such as clarification and contradiction (see syntactic devices of CF in 2.3.1.2). Givón (1991, 1995) also established the following criteria for markedness: cognitive complexity, frequency distribution and structural complexity. According to this definition, marked constituents

require mental effort, increased attention and more processing time from the recipient. The vital barrier here for second language learners is that, while a certain word order pattern may be considered unmarked in one language, it may be pragmatically marked in another language. Dryer (1995) argues that ‘any attempt to define ‘pragmatic markedness’ in universal pragmatic notions cannot succeed (ibid, p. 127). However, the functional-typological approach to SLA helps predict the zone of challenge in the L2 acquisition of selected linguistic characteristics based on their situation in the hierarchy and their relative level of typological markedness.

In other words, the term of markedness has been utilised in SLA research to predict both the level of transfer, and the relative difficulty or ease in the acquisition of a L2 ⁶⁶. It is generally believed that marked characteristics, due to their greater cognitive and structural complexity, are more difficult to learn than unmarked characteristics, and less transferable from the L1 to the L2. Thus, markedness has been used as a valuable research tool in SLA studies because of its predictive and explanatory power.

In light of numerous empirical studies, it is broadly accepted that the mother language affects the acquisition of any target languages, which may affect all linguistic structures, including pragmalinguistic structures and discourse (Odlin, 2003). Consequently, the question is not whether transfer occurs, but what, why, how much and when particular L1 structures are transferred while others are not. Odlin (1989) defined the concept of language transfer as ‘the influence coming from differences and similarities between the second/foreign language and any other language that has been previously acquired’ (Odlin, 1989, p. 27), thereby making three things possible: overproduction (errors), avoidance or positive transfer⁶⁷. In other words, in second language acquisition, when the relevant structure or item is the same in the L1 and

⁶⁶ See Rutherford (1982), Hyltenstam (1987), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 101).

⁶⁷For more details on language transfer, see Lado (1957), Oller (1970) and Richards (1971).

the L2, linguistic interference can result in correct language production known as positive transfer. The more similar the two languages are and the more the student is aware of the link between them, the more positive transfer will happen. Arabic learners of English, for example, can learn topicalisation (topic fronting) because it is positioned as the sentence theme (see 2.3.3 and 2.4.2.2) in both languages. However, language interference is often the result of negative transfer that results in three different types of errors:

1. The transfer of structures and units that are not the same in both languages. For example, in English, the verb is essential in forming the sentence ‘Maria [V is] happy’. In Arabic, however, two nouns can be used to form a full sentence: ‘[N1 Maria] [N2 saeeda]’. Novice Arabic ESL students may produce a transfer error and omit the necessary verb ‘is’ because of their reliance on Arabic, resulting in the phrase ‘Maria happy’.
2. The overproduction of structures that are similar in both languages (as mentioned in 3.2.2).
3. The avoidance of structures and units that are either similar or different in both languages due to lack of awareness of these structures (as stated in 3.2.2).

Eckman (1977) argues that, on the basis of ideas of typological markedness, language transfer and a contrastive analysis of the native language and the target language, it should be possible to predict aspects of a language that challenge L2 students. In response to this possibility, Eckman (1977) presented the Markedness Differential Hypotheses (MDH):

‘The areas of difficulties that a language learner will have can be predicted on the basis of a systematic comparison of the grammars of the L1, L2 and the markedness relations stated in universal grammar, such that,

- (a) those areas of the second language which differ from the first language and are more marked than the first language will be difficult,
- (b) the relative degree of difficulty of the areas of the second language which are more marked than the first language will correspond to the relative degree of markedness and
- (c) those areas of the second language which are different from the first language but are not more marked than the first language will not be difficult.’ (Eckman, 1977, p. 321)

For example, as previously discussed in 3.1.1., focus fronting (preposing) is frequently used in Arabic, however, it is considered a more marked structure⁶⁸ in English than in Arabic because English has a very limited inflectional system. Clefted structures, on the other hand, are rarely used in Arabic and considered less marked structures in English because SVC⁶⁹/SVO word order is retained (see 2.3.1.4.2); in relation to other syntactic constructions in English, cleft structures demonstrate a relatively low degree of structural markedness. Consequently, more marked structures are expected to be more difficult to acquire less marked structures are expected to be easier to acquire in accordance with the MDH (for more details on Saudi learners acquiring English pragmalinguistic structures, see Chapter 5).

The MDH argues that native language structures that are different from target language structures and typologically less marked are more likely to be transferred, whereas native language structures that are different from target language structures and typologically more marked will not be transferred. In addition, predictions can be made as to both the difficulty and order of linguistic characteristics in the acquisition process; more marked structures are expected to be acquired later or with more difficulty, and less marked structures will be acquired first or without difficulty.

⁶⁸ For more details about the constrained rules of focus fronting in English, see 2.3.1.4.1 of this study.

⁶⁹ The abbreviation SVC stands for subject, verb and complement.

In sum, the MDH determines potential obstacles in the L2 learning process not just based on differences and similarities evolved from a contrastive analysis (CA) of two languages (as in traditional CA) but also through a combining of the terms of language transfer and typological markedness (Braid, 1999, p.84). In contrast to traditional CA, the functional-typological approach to SLA has a predictive power and is much more explanatory, since the application of the generalisations formed by language typologists help researchers to know difficulties in the L2 acquisition of linguistic characteristics in terms of their position in an (implicational) hierarchy and their relative degree of typological markedness

Research has not fully addressed the opportunities the functional-typological approach gives for the examination and clarification of SLA. Despite the fact that a wide variety of linguistic characteristics have been explained by the functional-typological approach, only few typological universals have been presented in SLA studies, such as the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (NPAH) (Keenan and Comrie, 1977; Song, 2001).

The next section discusses second language learning materials and methods that facilitate the acquisition of a target language, particularly the markedness structures of the target language.

3.4 Information Structure in Second Language Teaching Materials

As far as ESL learning materials are concerned in this study, it has been argued by many researchers (see Gass, 1984; Blyth, 2000; Callies, 2006) that functional notions of language use that connect to IS tend to be under-represented in ESL curricula for early stage and advanced stage L2 learners. For instance, ESL curricula do not shed light on IS concepts (New and Given) and their specific syntactic devices in written and spoken English. Klein (1988)

also argues that ESL curricula exhibit great deficits English Focus devices and their communicative functions.

Another problem in ESL curricula is the lack of discourse-focused approach ⁷⁰, so the English forms in ESL curricula are presented as grammatical rules that are separate from their functions. Gass (1984) claims that the ESL curricula (textbooks) mainly deal with sentences and the organisation of constituents within the sentences and only rarely deal with forms and their pragmatic functions in discourse. This may guide to L2 learners' awareness of the former terms, but not the latter (Gass, 1984, p. 123). Similar observations were also made by recent researchers such as Bos, Hollebrandse and Sleeman, (2004), who argue that all different ESL subjects such as grammar and phonology have individual structural properties and therefore have no interaction with pragmatics (as discussed in 3.1.1). Callies and Keller (2008) also examined recent popular grammar and textbooks that are regularly used in German high schools for ESL instruction and found that these textbooks, such as *English Grammar 2000*, still show considerable deficits.

Many researchers have stressed the need for teaching pragmalinguistics in the ESL classroom in order to develop students' ability to communicate properly in the second language (see Kasper, 2001; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper and Rose, 2002). For example, L2 learners need to comprehend the different syntactic devices that are available in English because these devices express different pragmatic meanings. More particularly, native speakers of English do not utilise these devices randomly but select from various options to serve their communicative needs (as mentioned in 1.1). The lack of IS concepts and a discourse approach in ESL curricula, however, have led to limited awareness of the appropriate use of

⁷⁰This method will be discussed in detail in the next section.

pragmalinguistic structures, so pragmatics is considered to be one of the barriers to second language acquisition.

The next section sheds light on some concepts and assumptions in second language acquisition and demonstrates some teaching methods that increase learners' awareness of the pragmalinguistic structures of a second language, thereby resulting in stable knowledge.

3.5 Knowledge and Stability in Teaching

In this field of research, target language information confronted by L2 learners is expressed as 'input'. This 'input' changes to 'intake' once it is acquired by L2 learners (Sharwood Smith, 1993). Intake is 'a subset of the detected input (comprehended or not) held in short-term memory, from which connections with long-term memory are probably built or strengthened' (Reinders, 2012, p. 27). Macis (2011) mentions that 'nativists like Krashen (1985, 1987) believe that natural internal mechanisms operate upon comprehensible input which guides to language knowledge/ competence' (ibid., p. 350). This is commonly discussed in literature as the 'Input Hypothesis', which Krashen (1985) defined as how 'learners acquire a target language if they are exposed to a kind of input' (ibid, p. 350). This viewpoint is also stated by Mitchell and Myles (1998) who explain that SLA research has a solid perspective that 'L2 input is fundamental for language learning' (ibid., p. 14). Mitchell and Myles (1998) also explain that ' in the early 1980s, the view that was supported by Krashen and other researchers that input was all that was important for the acquisition of L2 to take place' (ibid., p. 14).

It is clear that learners can achieve intake of a second language once it is comprehensible; L2 intake starts in short-term memory and this data only achieves stability when it is fully understood.

Discussions of this fact have focused on how input relates to intake and feeds into the learning process. Ito (2001) explains that there has been some confusion about the meaning of intake and that most of these views can be classified into two categories: intake as process and intake as product: 'In the process view, intake is a part of the learners' interlanguage system, and hence, is processed language, while in the product view, it is input that is unprocessed language' (ibid., p. 102). Some researchers (Reinders, 2012) add another category, suggesting that intake is both a process and product.

Another discussion has also focused on the degree of attention that should be paid to a second language input in order to lead to intake. Mitchell and Myles (1998) mention that in accordance with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, 'it was sufficient for L2 learner to pay attention to the meaning embedded in comprehensible input, for the acquisition of language forms to take place' (ibid., p. 138). Nevertheless, researchers, for example, Schmidt (1990, 1994), Sharwood Smith (1981, 1993) and other, argue that 'learners need to pay some degree of attention to language forms if acquisition is to take place' (Mitchell and Myles 1998, p. 138).

Schmidt's (1990) view that learners can achieve intake of a second language by paying conscious attention to the L2 input is commonly known as the 'noticing hypothesis'. Schmidt (2010) argues that the noticing hypothesis in literature relied on the assumption that 'input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, i.e., consciously registered' (ibid., p. 721). This hypothesis considers noticing to be an essential factor for learning and postulates that only what students/learners notice in the input becomes intake.

Zhang (2012) points out a commonality of those who advocate for the role of noticing in the process of L2 learning, assuming that ‘researchers who have adopted the role of noticing or awareness fundamentally come from the field of cognitive psychology’ (ibid., p. 580). Approaches which adopt or support the noticing hypothesis involve the framework of the interaction hypothesis⁷¹, output hypothesis, attention-processing model and the cognitive process (Zhang, 2012, p. 583). Researchers who insist on the importance of noticing in L2 learning are often called interactionists or social interactionists, and all their hypotheses rely on the acquisition of a second language through natural contexts that involve conversations between L2 learners. These conversations enhance noticing and provide learners with an opportunity to receive comprehensible input leading to language competence (Gass, 1997; Pica, 1991). For example, the interactive hypothesis, a term coined by Vygotsky, states that conversational interaction ‘facilitates SLA since it links input (what students read and hear); internal students’ capacities, more particularly selective attention; and output (what students produce) in productive paths’ (Long, 1996, p. 452). It is clear that, similar to Schmidt’s hypothesis, Vygotsky’s hypothesis advocates the role of noticing and interaction lead to comprehensible knowledge in SLA.

Conversely, Zhang (2012) also mentions some studies which refuse any efficient role of consciousness in SLA, remarking that ‘researchers who see no role for noticing in language acquisition mainly claim that the acquisition of language is different from learning’ (ibid., p. 581). Zhang (2012) suggests that these groups of researchers tend to depend more strongly on linguistic theories, i.e., the Chomsky’ theories (UG theories) and Krashen’s hypotheses, than on cognitive psychology theories. These linguistic theories ‘draw a clear differentiation

⁷¹ For more details about interaction and input hypothesis, attention-processing model and the cognitive process in SLA, see Long (1981), Pica (1991) and Gass (1997).

between learning and acquisition and argue that the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, unlike learning, happens in the absence of awareness' (Zhang, 2012, p. 581) like children unconsciously acquire their first language by engaging in natural environment (Stern 1983; Erlam, 2006). However, empirical research on linguistic theories has not clarified the role of noticing in SLA (Rebuschat, 2009).

It is important to mention here that, although interactionists (i.e., Vygotsky) and nativists (i.e., Chomsky and Krashen) have different beliefs, such as interactionists believe environmental circumstances (e.g., communications and conversations) are more important in language acquisition and nativists believe inborn circumstances are more important, all of them stress the role of the natural environment in SLA and place great emphasis on the importance of comprehensible input as a major component of SLA that leads to stable knowledge (Caroll, 2000), as shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

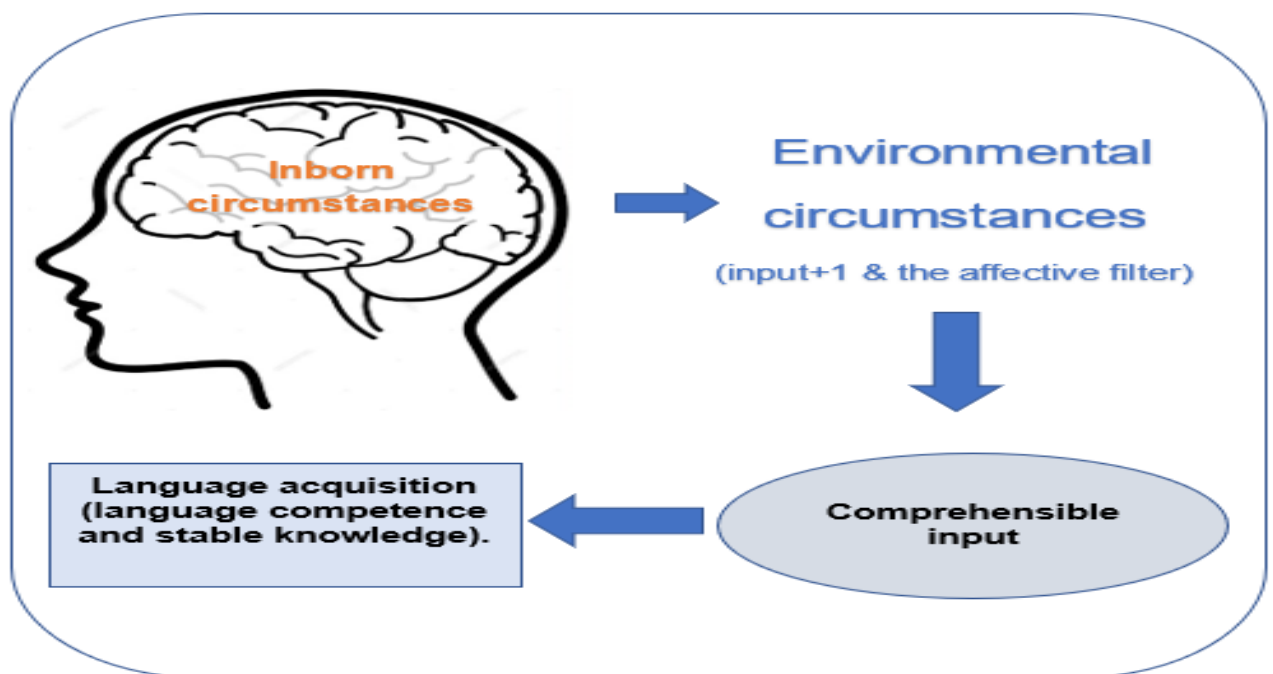


Figure 3.1: The nativists' hypothesis.

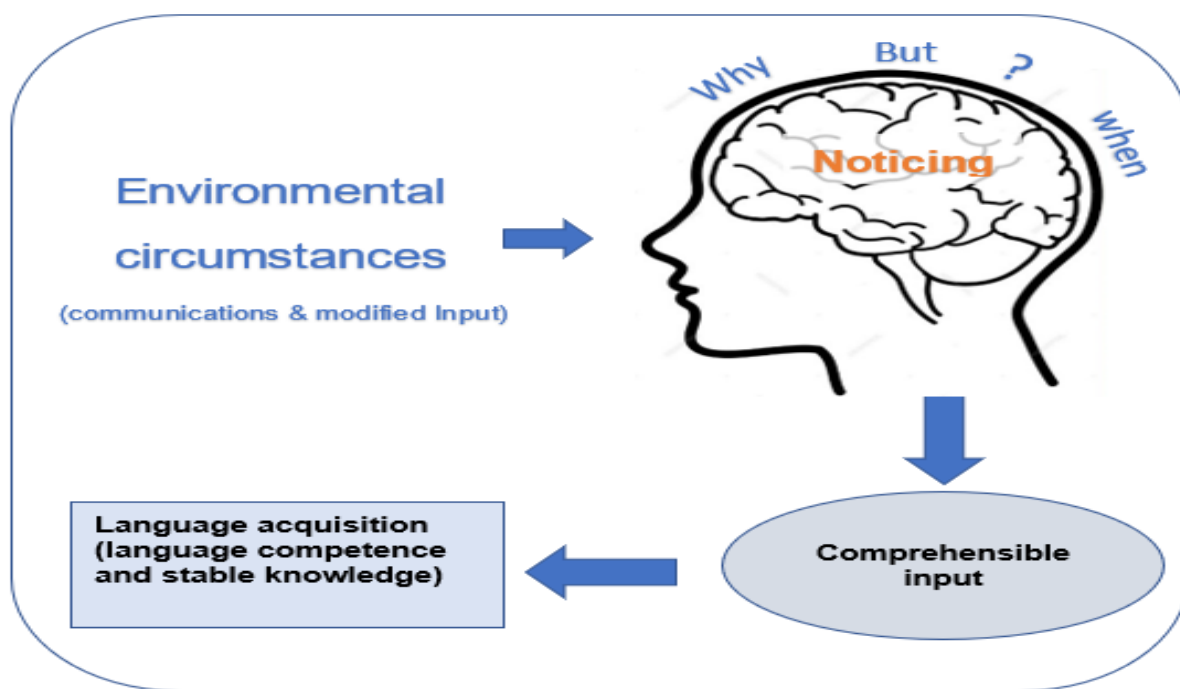


Figure 3.2: Social interactionists' hypothesis.

Another difference between interactionists' and nativists' hypotheses is in how they believe input is made comprehensible (Lightbown and Spada, 1993). Krashen (1985) argues that, for acquisition to take place, the input needs to be more advanced than the learner's current stage of linguistic knowledge (slightly above the student's mastery level). In addition, Krashen (1985) sees the importance of social circumstances in securing input for learners to become more comprehensible. These social factors relate to the idea of an affective filter, such as the relationship between teachers and L2 learners that affects input and determines what input gets through to the brain's central language acquisition mechanism in the absence of awareness (Allwright, 1995), as shown in Figure 3.1. On the other hand, interactionists believe that modifications, such as comprehension checks, self-repetition, clarification requests, expansion and restatement of native speakers' statements (Ellis, 1994, Wesche, 1994 and Brown, 2000),

enhance noticing and provide learners with comprehensible linguistic input, facilitating SLA (Lightbown and Spada, 1993; Ariza and Hancock, 2003), as shown in Figure 3.2.

It is clear that both nativists and interactionists agree on the importance of comprehensible input and the natural environment in SLA but disagree on what makes the input comprehensible. Nativists refuse any efficient role of consciousness in SLA, while interactionists advocate the importance of noticing in SLA.

Acquiring the pragmalinguistic aspects of a second language is quite different than other language aspects because although the pragmalinguistic aspects are somewhat universal (e.g., ‘Given first’ and ‘Focus last’), the way these aspects are encoded is language-specific and differs across languages (see 3.2.1). Specifically, L2 learners have to find out the specific form-function mapping rules that are most essential and common in the target language beside the pragmatic system that has already been acquired from the mother language (see 3.1.1). Therefore, following interactionists, noticing in a natural context is essential to facilitate the acquisition of the pragmalinguistic structures of a second language. Through noticing, L2 learners can understand similarities and differences between L1 structures and L2 structures, which leads to comprehensible and stable knowledge. The question is what pedagogical methods can be used to help increase learners’ attention and lead to language competence, particular to the stabilisation of knowledge.

ESL teachers can direct their students’ attention to language structures either explicitly by focusing on forms or implicitly by focusing on form. This determines how language input is introduced in the ESL classroom. There is debate in the field of SLA about the role of ‘focus on form’ and ‘focus on forms⁷²’ in the ESL classroom. ‘Focus on form’ was first proposed by Long in 1998 and refers to the idea that the acquisition of a second language happens best when

⁷²‘A focus on forms’ approach is also called a form-to-function approach.

learners' attention is drawn to language elements when they are needed for communication. Long (1991) defines 'Focus on form' as directing learners' attention 'to language items as they arise incidentally in the ESL classrooms whose essential focus on meaning or communication' (ibid., p. 45); it is about shedding light on particular language items to be noticed by L2 learners. On the other hand, 'focus on forms' refers to an explicit focus on language items in the classroom, with the ESL teacher adopting traditional teaching methods⁷³ such as repeating, memorising and (present, practice, produce; PPP) methods⁷⁴ that teach language forms separately from their functions (Sheen, 2002).

'Focus on form' and 'focus on forms' are theoretically different, as illustrated by Sheen (2002) who states that 'focus on form' comes from 'an assumed degree of similarity between first and second language acquisition assuming that the two processes are both based on exposure to comprehensible input arising from natural interaction . . . 'focus on forms', however, is based on the assumption that the ESL classroom [teaching of] comes from general cognitive processes' (ibid., p. 303). In other words, focus on forms depends on the explanation of a target language's features as a type of grammar rules (Braid, 1999, p. 4).

Apparently, L2 teachers need to use implicit (focus on form) methods and the explicit (focus on forms) methods to teach the pragmalinguistics of a second language. In the implicit method, noticing happens in natural context, which helps learners acquire the discourse pragmatics of the target language; in the explicit method, noticing happens through explicit instruction, which is necessary for the acquisition of difficult structures.

⁷³An example of a 'focus on forms' method is when L2 learners are given a grammar rule with an example, are told to memorise it and are asked to apply the rule to another example (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 12).

⁷⁴ For more details about traditional methods of teaching, see Jarvis (2015) and Manko et al. (2007).

Nevertheless, there have been some arguments against the effectiveness of the explicit method of teaching in ESL classrooms. Stokes (1975) denies any positive effects of explicit teaching, stating that ‘grammatical description is often regarded as irrelevant to the teaching of English as a second/foreign language’ (ibid., p. 7). Stokes (1975) argues that explicit descriptions of L2 grammar can only be useful when teachers systematically relate structure to use, which is what the implicit method depends upon. The reason behind this claim is that, unlike the implicit method, which teaches forms with their functions (use), teaching only the grammatical structures of a second language generally fails to build connections with language use (Dekeyser, 2003). This makes the pragmalinguistic knowledge of a second language very difficult to teach relying only on an explicit method because using the language forms along with their functions is a condition for building pragmalinguistic competence (see Chapter 3 of this study).

Similarly, Erlam (2006) also argues against the usefulness of explicit teaching in building linguistic knowledge of a target language, stating, ‘it is implicit rather than explicit competence that linguistic knowledge is composed of’ (ibid., p. 465). Another similar point of view supposes that ‘conscious and explicit knowledge of grammar could never contribute anything to the acquisition of the second language, however, it is relevant to learning only’ (Mashy, 1991, p. 302), once again casting doubt on the supposed usefulness of explicit teaching methods in building a strong knowledge base in a second language. Similarly, Krashen (1987) doubts about the usefulness of explicit teaching in the ESL classrooms since learners focus on accuracy instead of fluency which leads to slow down the learning process. Krashen (1987) supported this idea in his claims on the explicit teaching in his ‘monitor hypothesis’ that second language learners rely on conscious learning and explicit knowledge of second language

grammars to correct and monitor the acquired L2 system, which will never lead them to achieving second language competence.

On the other hand, other researchers defend the role of explicit teaching in developing second language competence. Nicholas (1991), for instance, affirms the idea that explicit instructions increase students' conscious reflections on language, leading to improve language use and stable knowledge. Additionally, Hudson (1999) claims that explicit teaching methods lead to better overall education. He argues that one of most important advantages of explicit teaching is 'it helps to increase self-awareness which improves scientific thinking or analytical thoughts' (ibid., p. 9-10). Vickers and Ene (2006) refer to another advantage of explicit teaching in second language learning in relation to improving grammatical accuracy. Hedge (2000) has a similar point of view, adopting the idea that explicit teaching helps students 'refine their interlanguage and gain greater accuracy' (ibid., p. 151). Hedge (2000) also believes that most researchers would agree that 'the explicit teaching of second language can facilitate and speed up the grammar acquisition processes' (ibid., p. 151). Nevertheless, she also believes that although the explicit instruction seems to be useful in the case of linguistically simple grammar, it does not seem to be useful in areas where the relationship between structures and their functions is essential in building the language.

Dekeyser (2003) agrees, arguing that there are 'different levels of usefulness of explicit instructions for different degrees of difficulty' (ibid., p. 331). However, Dekeyser (2003) disagrees with Hedge's (2000) view on the usefulness of explicit methods in teaching simple grammars. In contrast, Dekeyser (2003) insists on the usefulness of explicit instruction in difficult areas of a second language. In areas of difficulty, according to Dekeyser (2003), teaching needs to focus on forms to make L2 learners aware of the complex structures that are hard to be learn implicitly. Dekeyser (2003) argues that the researchers who agree with UG

theories have not been able to give convincing evidence that L2 learners can acquire complex structures without being aware of them. Both side of the debate support his suggestion that explicit instructions are helpful in the acquisition of difficult aspects of a second language.

This argument boosts the idea that explicit instructions are useful in teaching the area of differences between the pragmalinguistic structures of the first and the second languages which is difficult to be acquired by L2 learners. The area of difficulties needs more explanation and practicing (such as the constraining rules of preposing discussed earlier in see 2.3.1.4.1), and hence, explicit method triggers L2 learners' attention to this area of difficulties which would facilitate acquiring the second language.

This argument bolsters the idea that explicit instructions are useful in teaching differences in the pragmalinguistic structures of the first and the second languages which are difficult to be acquired. Difficult aspects of a language require more explanation and practice, and hence, explicit methods trigger L2 learners' attention, which helps them master these difficulties. However, the criterion for identifying difficulties in second language structures are very complicated. For example, some L2 structures may be similar to L1 structures; however, L2 learners' lack of awareness of these similarities may still make these structures difficult to process (as will be seen in 5.1.1).

The raises the question of how the former pedagogical methods (both explicit and implicit) can increase learners' awareness of the pragmalinguistic structures of a second language, thereby resulting in stable knowledge.

Research on the teachability of the discourse pragmatic knowledge of a second language in classrooms (i.e., Blyth, 2000; Kasper, 2000; Katz, 2000; Kerr, 2002; Callies and Keller, 2008) has shown that the target language IS is teachable not only to early learners but also to advanced

learners. However, there are few studies that explicitly address teaching and pedagogical aspects of pragmalinguistic structures that help increase L2 learners' awareness about these structures.

Both implicit and explicit teaching methods seem to be essential to the pragmalinguistic development of learners. The implicit method is essential in the ESL classroom because the pragmalinguistic structures of a second language develop through the creation of natural context⁷⁵ (Trillo, 2002). This natural context helps notice and use the language forms along with their functions, which is essential in language acquisition. Furthermore, the central factor of this method is that learners should explore language by themselves to increase their awareness of structures and their functions in the second language; this is known as meta-linguistic awareness, which 'the development in learners of an enhanced consciousness to the forms and functions of language' (Carter, 2003, p. 64). Some examples of implicit methods that help notice and extract different syntactic structures are communication-based activities, watching English movies and reading English books and articles, which successfully facilitate using the language. Macaro (2003) argues that using the implicit method helps build communicative competence, which is the foundation of SLA. Blyth (2000) takes a similar point of view:

'focus on form exercises seek to create the ideal conditions for grammar learning, the "teachable moment" as it were, when a learner has a communicate need that can be achieved only by a specific syntactic form, to put it differentially, the moment when a form becomes communicatively salient'. (ibid, p.192)

⁷⁵ For more details about the second language pragmalinguistic competence, see 3.1.1 of this study.

In addition, one important kind of implicit methods is using authentic materials⁷⁶ in the ESL classroom (also called a discourse method⁷⁷) in order to help L2 learners notice the language forms along with their functions in a natural context. Some researchers (i.e., Blyth, 2000; McCarthy, 1991) suggest that different canonical word orders are best taught contextually in terms of their functions. McCarthy (1998) argues that a discourse grammar method is an important technique for teaching variant word orders that can only be realised in discourse. Discourse grammar, as defined by McCarthy (1998), consists of ‘analysing grammar as an aspect of discourse rather than as something that operates only within the boundaries of the clause or sentence’ (ibid., p. 263). He further focuses on the significance of context, arguing that ‘contextual awareness helps in the recognising of choice’ (ibid., p. 268). Similarly, Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) argue that ‘it would also appear important to adopt a more functional method to the teaching of structures in English for specific purposes’ (ibid., p. 61). They propose that

‘more attention has to be paid, in target language teaching of English for specific or/and academic purposes, to acquire the pragmatic knowledge required to manipulate information structure in specific ways. An essential first step is one of consciousness-raising and would involve increasing students’ awareness.’ (ibid., p. 60)

A discourse-focused technique, such as confronting L2 learners with literary text types (natural contexts; Maley, 2001), results in consciousness-raising and initial awareness of forms and their functions in a second language, thereby positively enhancing L2 learning (Van Lier, 2001, p. 162). Callies and Keller (2008) propose using literary texts such as poems and letters in teaching (see Appendix I). These literary texts focus L2 learners’ attention on the forms within

⁷⁶ Authentic materials are any materials written in English that were not generated for intentional use in the ESL classrooms.

⁷⁷ Many terms are used throughout this study to refer to ‘a discourse grammar method’ including a discourse method, a functional method, a discourse-focused method and a function-to-form method.

meaningful contexts, which may serve as a useful starting point for learning the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. Callies and Keller (2008) also suggest using discourse grammar technique for the teaching of pragmalinguistic structures in a larger unit on text linguistics such as cohesion, coherence, style, focusing and text types and involving varied activities that are designed to increase learners' awareness of the basics of pragmalinguistics in relation to different literary texts (i.e., letters, newspapers and short stories). The great significance of discourse context makes information highlighting a fruitful integration of linguistics and literature in ESL classrooms (Hughes and McCarthy, 1998).

On the other hand, explicit teaching (focus on forms) is no less important, as it makes learners aware of syntactic patterns that cannot be easily learned implicitly. As mentioned earlier, explicit teaching is more useful in circumstances where there are differences between the first language parameters and the second language parameter, as is the case with Arabic and English in this study. Similarities between the pragmalinguistics of the two languages may also lead to problems such as overuse of specific structures (as will be seen in 5.1.2), so the explicit method is necessary to help L2 learners understand similarities and differences between the first and the second languages. Mueller (2010) argues that explicit teaching methods raise L2 learners' attention to any specific linguistic forms. Hudson (1999) supports this view and argues that explicit teaching methods increase L2 learners' self-awareness about linguistic structures, which is important in facilitating the acquisition of a second language (as mentioned earlier). In addition, Ellis (2004) argues that the declarative (explicit) knowledge of the lexical, syntactic, phonological and pragmatic characteristics of a target language which is held consciously is verbalisable and learnable. Similarly, Palacios-Martínez and Martínez-Insua (2006) mention that presenting a second language's syntactic structures used to achieve IS

through formal instruction (explicit teaching) in a classroom setting leads to positive transfer (see 3.2.2).

The assumption here is explicit methods of teaching seem to be more effective and needed in circumstances of difficult structures where there is no previous exposure to a target language. Implicit methods of teaching, on the other hand, seem also to be needed since the natural context helps notice and form the relationship between structures and their functions, which is essential in building the language, while the explicit method does not help in that (as mentioned earlier; see Hedge, 2000). Therefore, Explicit and implicit teaching in ESL classrooms are like two souls in one body that ESL teachers cannot rely on one and let the other. MacWhinney (1997) argues for the significance of employing the implicit and explicit methods in the language learning process as both methods are closely connected. He states that ‘providing L2 learners with explicit instructions along with standard implicit exposure would be a no-lose proposition...’ (MacWhinney, 1997, p. 278). Another point of view seems similar to MacWhinney’ view (1997) and advocates implementing both methods in L2 teaching is Rebuschat’s (2009) view which stating that L2 ‘learners are able to acquire syntactic structures of a novel language under both intentional and incidental learning positions’ (ibid., p. 156).

Employing implicit methods of teaching while also offering in-depth about similarities and differences between the first and the second languages seems to be more effective in developing learners’ awareness of discourse pragmatics, which leads to comprehensible and stable knowledge (see Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4).

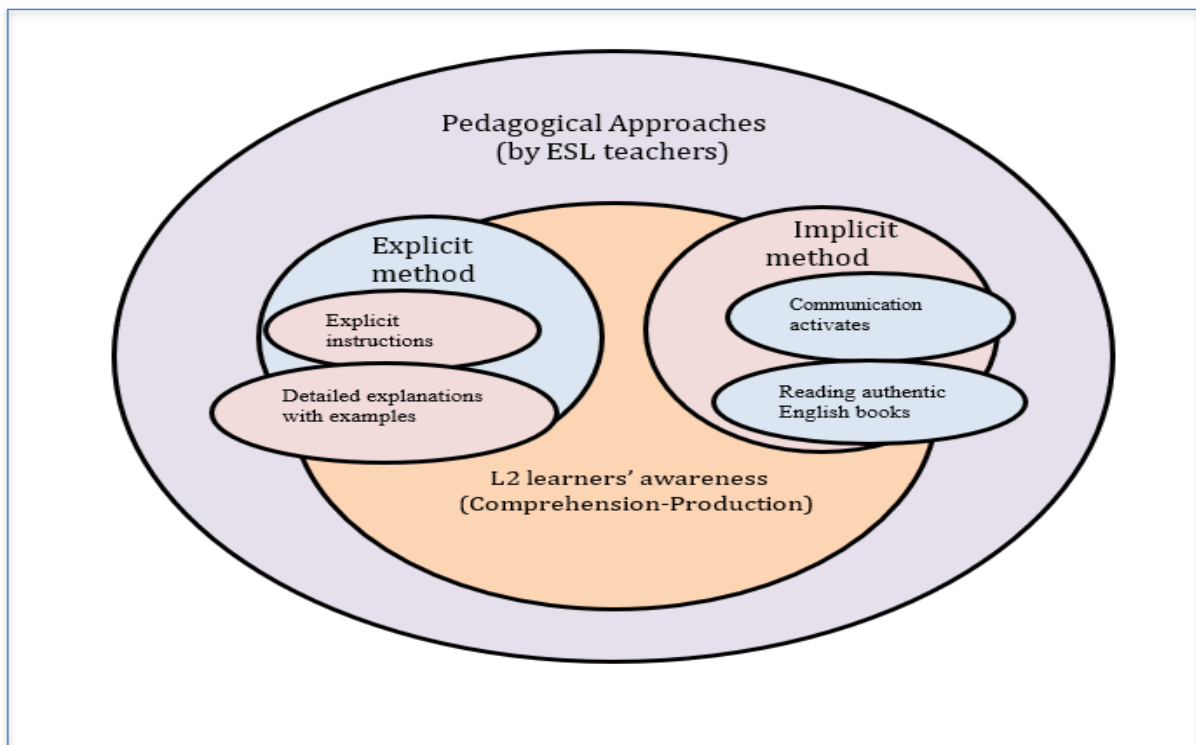


Figure 3.3: Pedagogical approaches raise the learners' awareness about IS.

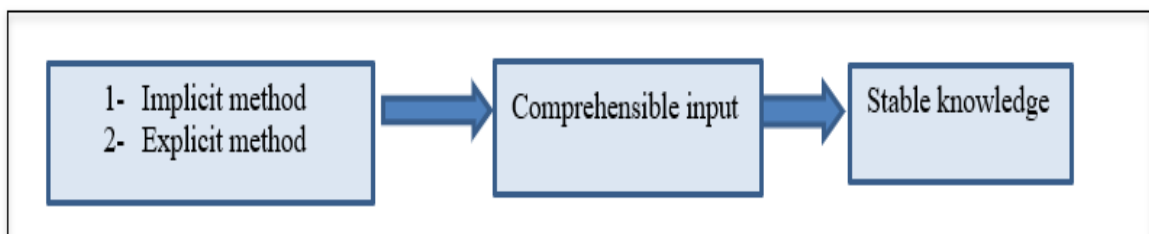


Figure 3.4: Pedagogical approaches lead to stable knowledge.

In sum, the lack of ESL curricula that address the functional notions of language use in connection with IS along with the lack of publications that explicitly present teaching and pedagogical methods of discourse pragmatics have led to limited awareness of the appropriate

use of pragmalinguistic structures in a second language. As a result, IS (discourse pragmatics) is one of the barriers to learners acquiring a target language successfully.

Concepts such as “ L1 influence” and “typological markedness” are critical to my research findings, as I will show later, these factors hinder L2 learners in acquiring the target language and play a role in the behaviour of Saudi learners of English. Furthermore, employing explicit and implicit teaching methods in the ESL classroom appears to be important for the pragmalinguistic development of learners, since these methods increase their awareness of structures and their functions in the second language. Explicit methods help learners notice complex patterns in the second language that are hard to learn implicitly, while implicit methods create natural contexts that help L2 learners to immerse themselves in the target language and discover the pragmatic functions of its syntactic structures, through engagement with that language.

Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter presents the main research questions and the aim of the study. It discusses the research design, the methods of data gathering and data analysis and provides information on the participants, their division into various groups and some details about their participation in this study.

4.1 Research Questions

Research Q1: How do Arabic and English realise information structure (IS)? What are the similarities and differences in IS between both languages?

Research Q2: How do Saudi ESL learners perform regarding their realisation of English IS compared to native English speakers? Is there any correlation between pragmalinguistic competence and grammatical competence?

Research Q3: What effect can the use of implicit and explicit instructions have on L2 learners' acquisition of IS? Are there any differences between the learners at early and advanced stages before and after they are taught IS?

Research Q4: Will the teaching and acquisition of pragmalinguistic knowledge result in stable knowledge?

Research Q5: What is the current situation regarding IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia?

4.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to explore the acquisition of English IS by Saudi L2 learners. The study intends to examine the use of the syntactic constructions through which IS is achieved and the teaching of these constructions in second language learning.

The objectives of this study are, first, to explore the structural similarities and dissimilarities of IS, namely ‘focus and ‘topic’ in Arabic and English. Comparing the structures of both languages (contrastive analysis) would help researchers discover the barriers L2 learners face when trying to acquire a second language, particularly the syntactic constructions.

Second, in relation to SLA theory, this research strives to examine the relation of pragmalinguistic and grammatical abilities in the target language and the impact of the IS principles of the first language (Arabic) on the acquisition of the second language (English).

Third, this research intends to explore whether teaching is effective in helping L2 learners acquire IS knowledge and whether teaching is an effective method for helping L2 learners retain this knowledge over time.

At last, this research attempts to improve the learning experience to help L2 learners acquire English more effectively.

4.3 Research Design

In research, there are two major paradigms: positivist and interpretive. The paradigm that a researcher uses relies on where she/he sees her/himself regarding the world around and her/his personal thoughts and beliefs (Dörnyei, 2007). The positivist researcher sees her/himself as an

outsider looking ‘in’ on a study and believes she/he is independent, not having any relationship with the area she/he is exploring. The results of positivist research are objective, with no personal bias, and the data gathered in positivist research is quantifiable, i.e., numerical data. Pollard (2002) states, ‘the aim of the positivist research is to understand and describe the phenomena and to impart this understanding to other people’ (ibid., p. 37). It is clear that positivists believe they are separate from their study—in which they have no opinion—and can easily share their findings. On the other hand, the interpretive researcher sees her/himself ‘inside the circle’, exploring the world around her/him. She/he has an epistemological position of that of someone sharing information and creating relations that enhance her/his understanding of various points of view. The results of this type of research are subjective, as they are influenced by the researcher’s opinions. Information gathered in interpretive research is ‘rich’ data, which is generally qualitative, but quantitative data can be gathered as well. Pollard (2002) mentions that the purpose of interpretive research is to explore and ‘describe the phenomena of the world in an attempt to get shared meaning with other people’ (ibid., p. 38). Consequently, the main difference between interpretive and positivist research is that interpretive researchers tend to interpret their findings and detail the overall meaning to others rather than rather than simply understanding what they have researched.

In this study, the researcher works within the interpretive paradigm. Her ontological place in education is that of someone sharing knowledge with others to understand our general surroundings. The researcher believes it is crucial to have great associations with individuals to enable both their knowledge and her knowledge to allow for efficient learning to occur, i.e., the interpretive paradigm sees reality to be ‘socially designed or constructed’ (Mertens, 2005, p. 12). Despite the fact that some positivist methods were used to gather quantifiable data, interpretivist research methods were the overall choice for this study. By utilising interpretive

research methods, the researcher was able to be a part of the study and fully understand and explore the learners' competence about the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. The researcher was also able to explore ESL teachers' opinions on the importance of teaching IS in ESL classrooms and on whether L2 learners can acquire the L2 structures through teaching.

To put it differentially, this research follows the interpretive paradigm because it depends mostly on the researcher's and participants' experiences teaching the pragmalinguistics of the target language and the exploration of how these structures are used by L2 learners. It also explores participants' thoughts and views on the benefits and hindrances of implementing IS in teaching. In line with the interpretive paradigm, a mixed-methods approach is used in this study to triangulate the applied methods, ensuring the collection of the most credible results. A mixed-methods approach indicates the use of both qualitative and quantitative data at the level of data gathering or data interpretation to best answer the study questions (Morse, 1991; Dörnyei, 2007). Similarly, Johnson et al. (2007) mentions that a mixed-methods approach helps the researcher expand his/her understanding and knowledge of the research questions. In this study, the quantitative data is gathered through a set of tests for L2 learners (Saudi university students at two different proficiency levels). These tests evaluate learners' performance in English grammar and English information structure⁷⁸. The qualitative data is collected through the ESL teachers' interviews and the researcher's and the teachers' reflexive teaching journals⁷⁹. The role of the quantitative method in this study is to help the researcher to address general ideas concerning L2 learners' knowledge of the syntactic constructions used to achieve IS. The qualitative data helps the researcher give a deeper understanding of the quantitative

⁷⁸For more details on the quantitative data, see 4.5.1.

⁷⁹For more details on the qualitative data, see 4.5.2.

data (Dörnyei, 2007). The findings from the qualitative phase are used to further illustrate the findings from the quantitative phase; this brings the research to life as it is interpreted through human experiences (Gillham, 2000, p. 82). The quantitative method investigates and estimates L2 learners' performance, but it cannot give a thorough explanation of the reasons behind their performance. Incorporating the qualitative method gives deeper explanation and meaning to the phenomena from a human perspective, thereby allowing the researcher to explore the reasons behind the learners' performance and investigate the setbacks and successes in teaching the pragmalinguistics of the target language. In the two-phase design, the quantitative phase (data from tests) and the qualitative phase (data from interviews and reflexive teaching journals) complement each other (Brown, 2004).

Utilising a mixed-method approach in the research helps to overcome the limitations of one method by utilising the other method (Dörnyei, 2007). For instance, by using quantitative methods, the researcher is being less subjective in the study and able to involve a sizable number of participants (80 second language learners in this study) in order to overcome the weaknesses generalised of the qualitative part which contains only a small sample size (6 ESL teachers) that cannot be generalised. Gass and Mackey (2000) argue that using mixed methods in the research maintain the objectivity of the study and minimise the subjectivity (bias) of the qualitative method. Moreover, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods will in fact enhance the reliability and the validity of the research (see Faerch and Kasper, 1987). Using two methods in order to demonstrate the same objective is a way to check the validity of the research's findings. This in fact is as what Mackey and Gass (2005) call 'triangulation' (as mentioned earlier) which is 'using different research methods or measures to explore a particular phenomenon' (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 181). Therefore, this method has been found fruitful and effective.

Generally, the mixed-method design has the advantage in the sense that it allows for a clearer understanding of the study results. Nevertheless, there are limitations as it needs a considerable amount of time. Thus, collecting data in this study went over three phases, a pre-experimental, experimental, and post-experimental phase, and all these stages took around 6 months to collect enough data (see section 4.5.5 of this study).

The participants, methods of data collection, the three major stages of the study and methods of data analysis will be explained in detail in the following sections.

4.4 The Participants

The participants in this study are eighty ESL learners, six ESL teachers and ten native speakers.

All participants in this study are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

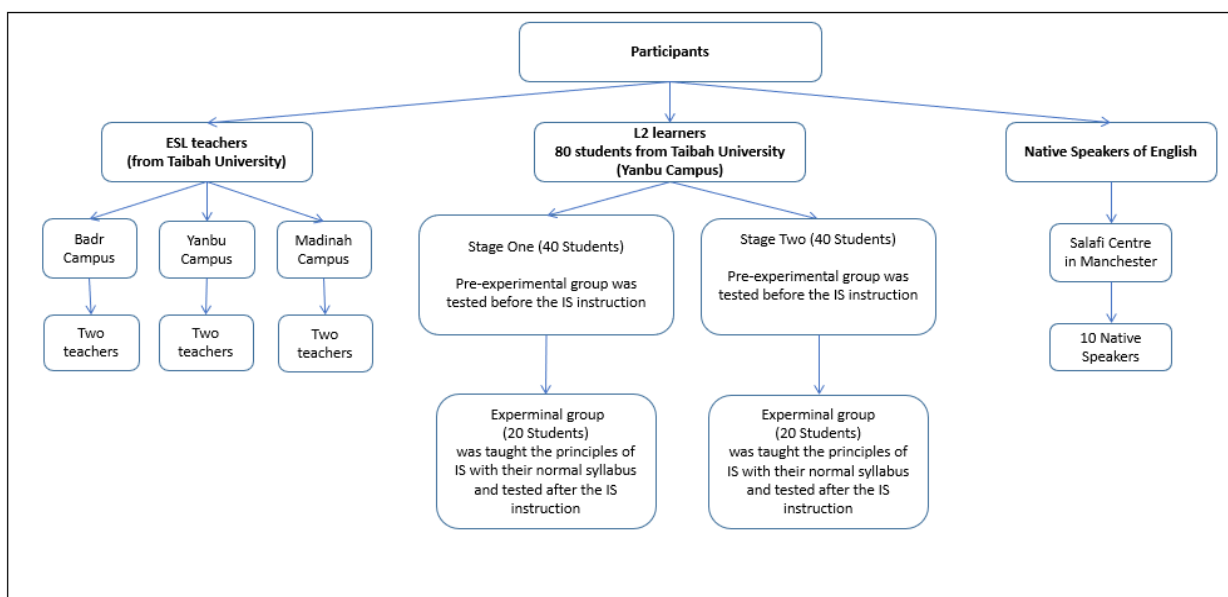


Figure 4.1: Study participants.

Firstly, the eighty ESL learners were chosen from the Department of Arts and Humanities, from Taibah University (Yanbu branch) in Saudi Arabia (SA), since the researcher was teaching them at this university. They were all Saudi and they had an average of nine years of learning English at primary and high school level. None of them had experienced an extended stay in English- speaking countries, and none of them lived or were growing up in a bilingual family. The eighty ESL learners were divided in two groups (forty students each). The first group is considered as pre-intermediate learners of English (stage One) based on the language proficiency test run by the university upon their arrival at the university, while the second group of students (stage Two) are advanced language learners who were supposed to graduate by the end of the year 2018. A convenient sample was chosen because of its proximity and convenient accessibility to the researcher (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). In stage One, the participants' ages were between eighteen to nineteen years and in stage Two the participants' age were between twenty-one to twenty-two years. Each group was tested before the IS instruction (pre-experimental group). Twenty students from each group were selected and taught the discourse pragmatics of English within their normal syllabus (experimental group). Then, their performance after the IS instruction was compared with their performance before the IS instruction (see figure 4.1 above).

This is an important stage in conducting experiments as illustrated by Larsen-freeman and Long (1991) who mentioned that the purpose of having an experimental group in a study is that if this group is given a treatment and the post-treatment behaviour of this group was different than before the treatment, we can then conclude that the behaviour differs because of the treatment. The results of the experimental groups' performance before and after the IS instruction would provide evidence of the relative effectiveness of teaching English IS to L2

learners⁸⁰. Moreover, one of the purposes of having many experimental groups (S1 and S2 learners) in a study is that if these groups are given the same treatment (IS instruction) and their post treatment behaviour agrees with each other, then we can confirm the validity of the treatment. Therefore, it was ensured that the two groups S1 and S2 were as homogenous as possible, by giving them the same instructional level and providing them with the same materials for assessments in order to gain accurate results. Sapon-Shevin (2010) referred to homogenous groups in learning environment as organized groups of learners which are placed in similar environmental conditions. Callies (2009) argues that the attempt to build groups of learners as homogenous as possible by controlling external variables helps to generalise the research findings to a bigger population.

Secondly, the six ESL teachers were chosen from branch campuses of Taibah University in different cities in Saudi Arabia (two teachers from Taibah University-Yanbu Campus, two teachers from Taibah university-Madinah Campus, and two teachers from Taibah University-Badr Campus) and their age ranged from 28 to 53 years (see again figure 4.1). These teachers were selected based on the fact that they were the researcher's colleagues. Like the previous sample, a convenience sample was also chosen here because this group of teachers were easy to contact or to reach. Also, some of the teachers were teaching in different universities in Saudi Arabia.

⁸⁰ The reason that controlled groups were not included in this study because administering the test three times to such groups would be redundant; they would most likely produce the same results each time since they would not be taught IS. To obtain more meaningful results, participants' test scores before and after IS instruction were compared.

Thirdly, the third group was ten native speakers of English living in Manchester in the United Kingdom (UK); their ages ranged from twenty-five to fifty-five years and they were chosen from the Islamic Centre in Manchester since the researcher was teaching them Arabic studies at this centre for a short time. Most participants had a very little knowledge of English linguistics and none of them had any particular background of Arabic structures. All the participants worked at the Islamic Centre and some of them taught different subjects, such as Maths and Science. This procedure was intended to assist in deciding which of the two levels of the second language learners would have judgments most like those given by the English native speakers. The participating group of native speakers was included in the experiment since 'it is a general practice in most experimental studies in L2 research... a group of native speakers serves as the basis for the comparison' (Sorace, 1996, p. 385).

Before carried out the study, permission was sought from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia in order to conduct the study. After that, ethical approval for the research was obtained from the Ethical Approval Committee of the University of Salford in UK (see, Appendix A, Section1). Then, the participants (i.e., the teachers and L2 learners) were provided with a written consent form (see Appendix B and C), which contained many ethical considerations. The nature of the study and the potential benefits and risks of the study were explained in detail. Participants were informed that all information gathered would be confidential and would only be utilised for the purposes of research study: the teachers' and students' identities would be anonymous and whenever data from this study were published, their names would not be used. Data would be stored in a safe place, for example, paper data in a secure cabinet in the staff room at the faculty of Arts and Humanities Department at Taibah University (Yanbu Campus) and electronic data in password-protected file space on the university server, where only the researcher would have access to them. They could withdraw from the study at any time.

Participants were asked to confirm that they understood all the information in the consent form before taking part in the study. The researcher confirmed the ESL teachers' permission to record audio during the interviews and she informed them that any data from the tape recorder would be transferred and then deleted from it as soon as possible. Finally, a copy of the consent form was given to each of the participants.

It is important to mention that all precautions were investigated from the beginning of the study and were kept during and after the collection and interpretation of the data in order to confirm that every effort had been made to reduce any possibility of danger occurring to the ESL teachers or the L2 learners.

4.5 Data Collection

To view the relevance and importance of syntactic devices used to achieve IS in a second language acquisition, this study explores L2 learners' knowledge of second language pragmalinguistic structures, particularly topicalisation, preposing and clefted structures, their ability to use them in an appropriate context and the relation between their pragmatic and grammatical competence in SLA. However, it is important to mention here that these syntactic constructions are not very frequent in written English (Schachter, 1988 p. 224), hence, it was important to apply elicitation tasks, such as forms of L2 learners' writings (authentic discourse) and teachers' interviews with their reflective journals in order to give information sufficiently rich for the present investigation.

Following a discourse-focused approach in SLA discussed earlier in 3.5, the base of the elicitation tasks (i.e., the discourse completion task and the judgment task) was real situations

which may help native English speakers and L2 learners alike elicit an unpredictable variety of syntactic devices. However, obtaining certain structures (such as clefts) from the syntax field is one of the biggest challenges in SLA (Odlin, 2003, p. 441). L2 learners might not have had a chance to learn about structures or might have had some knowledge about them but lack confidence to use them, thus avoided using them.

The first part of the study presents the quantitative phase, which consisted of different elicitation tasks; all are in the form of written tests. The second part of the study presents the qualitative stage, which consisted of teachers' interviews and their reflective journals.

It is usually argued that accurate SLA study requires gathering 'as much data as possible about this complicated piece of human behavior' (Tarone, 1994, p. 336). Thus, the research instruments used for this study incorporate various data collection methods (as mentioned in 4.3), arguing for the triangulation of different methods to approach the research questions from various perspectives (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989) and to gain more valid research findings (Gass and Mackey, 2000), see Figure 4.2. All these research instruments will be discussed in detail next.

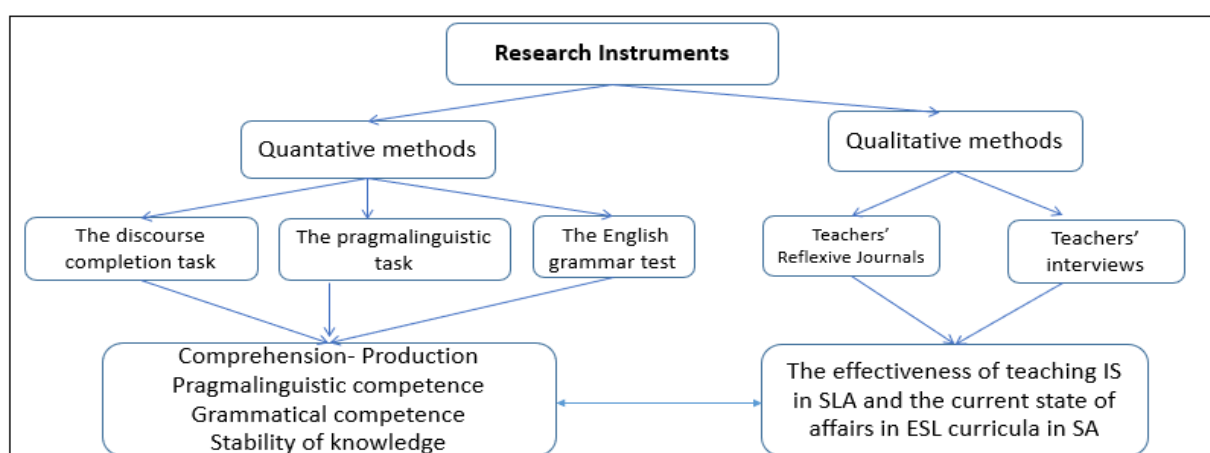


Figure 4.2: The triangulation of the research instruments.

4.5.1 The Quantitative Phase

In the quantitative phase, two instruments were used: The grammar test, which includes the multiple-choice task, and the IS test, which includes the discourse completion task and the pragmalinguistic judgment task. These tests were used in order to explore L2 learners' knowledge of second language linguistic resources and to explore the relation between their pragmatic and grammatical competence in SLA. Additionally, one great advantage of using the tests in this study was to gain a lot of information in a short period of time (Dörnyei, 2003).

To ensure the accurate results about learners' grammatical competence, the multiple-choice task in the English grammar test was taken from one of the English grammar tests found in British Study Centres (see Appendix G). Furthermore, given the significance of authentic context for the current exploration discussed earlier, L2 learners in the two elicitation tasks (the discourse completion task and the judgment task) were given some text passages from real situations and they were asked to imagine these situations and answer questions in the discourse completion tasks or choose the preferred answer from several options in the pragmalinguistic judgment tasks in order to clarify, correct or highlight their answers by using syntactic constructions such as preposing and it-clefts; see example 4.1 for an excerpt from Appendix H.

(4.1)

Situation 6:

You tell your friend (Sara) at school about some newly released kids' movies such as *Peter Rabbit* and *Wonder*. You tell her that you watched *Wonder* yesterday and that it was amazing.

Sara: Sorry, which movie did you watch yesterday? *Peter Rabbit*?

Your response: No, _____

All these elicitation tasks, the multiple-choice task, the discourse completion task and the pragmalinguistic judgment task are discussed in detail next.

4.5.1.1 The English Grammar Test - The Multiple-Choice Task

A language proficiency test, particularly one of the English grammar tests from British Study Centres, was applied in this study which consisted of multiple-choice questions, forty questions with each question containing four choices. The L2 learners had to select one of these; see example 4.2 for an excerpt from Appendix G.

(4.2)

Please circle the best option to complete the following sentence.

Q1: I come _____ Saudi Arabia.

- A. from
- B. to
- C. in
- D. at

The great advantage of using this test was to explore the level of learners' competence in English grammar. Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 32) mention 'standardised language tests are frequently used as a gauge for assessing proficiency level'. Additionally, the English grammar test was used in this study in order to compare L2 learners' level on the grammar test with their level on the IS test, i.e., how pragmatic and grammatical knowledge in a second language accurately correlate, since the relationship between pragmatic and grammatical competence in SLA still remained unclear in the literature (as mentioned in 3.1 of this study).

4.5.1.2 The Discourse Completion Task (production)

The purpose of this instrument was to explore which syntactic constructions native and non-native speakers used to present pragmatic functions, such as clarification and contrast, in the particular context provided (Carston, 1998, p. 984). The production task (the discourse completion task) in the first part of the IS test consisted of sixteen items (see, Appendix H, Section A). Each item is contextualised by a short text taken from a real situation (as mentioned earlier) and followed by an open response (an open-ended question) format, which the participants were asked to complete. Dörnyei (2003) mentions that open-ended questions include items that require the participants to fill in a blank space (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 47). These open-ended questions provide the researcher with a deep explanation about the L2 learners' use of the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. For example, each item required from the participants to use syntactic constructions in order to emphasise or contrast some constituents in their answers related to the questions. Some questions on the discourse completion task required the use of different kinds of Focus, i.e., broad focus (as in questions

1 and 10) and narrow focus⁸¹ (as in questions 5 and 13); see examples (4.3) and (4.4) for excerpts from Appendix H, Section A.

(4.3) Broad Focus (BF)

Situation 1:

[_{BF} Your neighbour is building a tree house]. Then, your friend (Maria) visits you and hears a loud noise.

Maria: What is that noise?

Your response: _____

(4.4) Narrow Focus (NF)

Situation 5:

Your friend (Sara) comes to visit you, and your neighbours are building [_{NF} a tree house].

Sara: What a noise! What are your neighbours building?

Your response: _____

⁸¹ For more information about these kinds of Focus, see 2.3.1.1 of this study.

Some other questions required the use of the contrastive topic⁸² to show clarity (as in question 4 and 12) or correction (as in question 3 and 8); see example (4.5) for an excerpt from Appendix H, Section A.

(4.5)

Situation 4:

You invited your three friends (Sara, Maria, Dania) to have dinner at your house. Your mum prepared a variety of tasty foods such as chicken, steak, soup and pastries, and then she left the house.

All your friends came to your house and had dinner with you. They told you that the food was tasty. Sara told you that she ate all [CT the chicken] because it was particularly good.

Your mum (the next day): How was the dinner yesterday? Who ate the steak?

Your response: Well, I do not know about the steak, but_____

Finally, the questions 2,6,7,9,11,14,15,16 could require the use of contrastive focus (CF) constructions, such as clefts and preposing discussed earlier in 2.3.1.4, depending on the context (see example 4.6 for an excerpt from Appendix H, Section A).

(4.6)

⁸² For more information about contrastive topic, see 2.3.3 of this study.

You are telling your friend that, although you do not like [CF Maths teacher], you respect her for all her effort.

Your friend: I bet some people are born teachers. Who is it again that you respect for her teaching? Your Science teacher?

Your response: _____

It is important to mention here that social variables, such as the relation between two interlocutors, politeness, social distance and direction which are often taken into consideration in pragmatic research as they can affect language use, were not considered in designing the DCT, as this piece of research deals exclusively with various syntactic devices and the mapping of these devices with their pragmalinguistic functions. While there is undeniably an element of ‘free’ choice (due to stylistic variation), there is no evidence suggesting that information flow and its mapping onto syntax can be influenced by such social variables—at least not to any great degree. For example, that contrastive focus can be realised at the beginning of a sentence is not expected to be affected by the relation between two speakers, as it often happens in other areas studied of purely pragmatic interest.

Distractors questions⁸³ were also not involved since the communicative goal was explicitly mentioned in the instructions of the test. In fact, it was very important that the participants were quite aware of the tasks and what was expected of them.

⁸³ Distractors questions are the questions which mislead the participants about the research topic.

The great advantage of the discourse completion task was that the given situation clearly constrained the learners' answers so that particular linguistic structures could be extracted (Kasper, 2000). Moreover, in spite of its oral setting, this completion task was required answers in writing rather than in authentic spoken language.

While the open response format in the test allows the researcher to see what L2 learners and native speakers of English in fact do when they need to contrast or emphasise a particular piece of information, it is considered to be suitable to trigger some certain syntactic means used to achieve IS. It has been argued that clefted structures are 'a more natural response for carrying a contrastive meaning' (Carston, 1998, p. 984), and the idea that it-cleft in particular frequently corrects a wrong assumption as mentioned earlier⁸⁴. In addition, preposing (focus fronting) has a contrastive pragmatic function not only in English, but furthermore cross-linguistically. Hence, the discourse completion task, which consists of open-ended questions, was utilised in this study to provide the researcher with detailed information (Brown, 2004) about L2 learners and native speakers use of pragmalinguistic structures.

4.5.1.3 The Pragmalinguistic Judgment Task (comprehension)

The pragmalinguistic judgment instrument is a mean for investigating 'how L2 learners assess their linguistic realisations in terms of appropriateness, politeness or other factors' (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p. 101). One of the methods for collecting such information is through a ranking scale. A ranking scale normally follows close-ended questions and is used when a researcher is interested in establishing some kind of priority among a set of objects (Lavrakas, 2008). A

⁸⁴ For more details about syntactic devices used to achieve IS, see 2.3.1.4 of this study.

ranking test asks participants to compare a list of different objects (DeFranzo, 2012), e.g., ‘Please rank each of the following items in order of importance with 1 being the least important object to 10 being the most important object.’ Unlike a discourse completion task (see 4.5.1.2), which has open-ended questions, one of the advantages of using a judgment task in this study is that it has close-ended questions (Dörnyei, 2003); these close-ended questions provide researchers with more accurate results (Bradburn, 1983, cited in Dörnyei, 2003) of L2 learners’ knowledge of the target language.

Pragmalinguistic assessment elicits ‘judgments about the appropriateness of linguistic structures and phrases in given situations’ (Barron, 2003, p. 106) and is used in this study to ensure the validity of the L2 learners’ results from the previous discourse completion task and to show different preferences for the use of pragmalinguistic structures between both native and non- native speakers (Ellis, 1991; Gass, 1994). Additionally, it was hoped that the ranking scale would give evidence as to whether or not the Saudi learners had knowledge about the contextual use of these syntactic means of the target language. For instance, since preposing is considered a very restricted by discourse in English, acceptance of L2 learners for this option (preposing) might show a lack of knowledge about discourse pragmatics in L2 (see Boström Aronsson, 2002).

The pragmalinguistic judgment task contains eight items (see, Appendix H, Section B) using the same situations that appeared in the previous discourse completion task. Participants were asked to indicate to what degree the given alternatives (answers) were appropriate in the context. Participants were asked to compare the suggested answers to each other by placing them in order of preference (1=lowest preference, 3=highest preference). All the given alternatives were ranked from 1–3; see example 4.7 for an excerpt from Appendix H, Section B).

(4.7)

Please rank the given alternatives by placing them in order of preference on scale from 1 to 3.

If you think a sentence is a very good option among other options, mark box 3. If you think a sentence is not an appropriate option at all, mark box 1.

	1	2	3
a. my Maths teacher I respect.			
b. it is my Maths teacher who I respect.			
c. who I respect is my Maths teacher.			
d. Own suggestion: -----			

Among the given discourse options were Topics (as in questions 3 and 6) and Focus with its different constructions such as preposing and different kinds of clefts (as in questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8), see examples (4.8) and (4.9) for excerpts from Appendix H, Section B.

(4.8) **Topic**

Situation 3:

You do not know who ate your sister's sandwich, but you saw your younger brother (Jusuf) eating [_{Topic} her sweets].

Your sister: What happened to my sandwich? Who ate it?

Your response:

	1	2	3
a. I do not know about your sandwich, but Jusuf ate your sweets.			
b. I do not know about your sandwich, but your sweets Jusuf ate.			
c. I do not know about your sandwich, but it was Jusuf who ate your sweets.			
d. Own suggestion:			

(4.9) Focus

Situation 5:

Your younger sister [_{Focus} Sara] baked a cake by herself. Then, your friend (Maria) came to your house, tasted your sister's cake and really liked it.

Your friend: Wow, who made the cake? I do not believe that Sara made the cake!

Your response: Yeah, I know it is hard to believe, but....

	1	2	3
a. Sara was the one who made the cake.			
b. Sara made the cake.			
c. the cake Sara made.			
d. Own suggestion. _____ _____ _____			

In addition, the participants were given an extra option to create their own response if they felt that none of the given possibilities were suitable (see example 4.9 above); the open-ended questions added depth to participants' responses (as noted earlier in the previous section).

It should be noted that the ranking scale in this study was an odd-number scale (three options). This kind of ranking scale was used to focus the L2 learners' attention on limited options connected to the target language structures, which demanded more concentrated effort from the learners. Offering too many options in the ranking scale could have scattered learners' attention or allowed them to complete the test quickly by making random choices; in contrast, extra focus and limited options might help produce more reliable data (Dörnyei, 2003).

4.5.1.4 The Use of Elicitation Tasks in SLA Research

This section explains the acceptability of the research tests that include different tasks (such as discourse completion tasks and judgment tasks) in SLA research. It shows some studies that utilised these tasks to gather data from L2 learners. It additionally presents a number of factors which were considered in designing the research tests, in order to enhance the reliability and the validity of these tests.

Many researchers, such as Shohamy (1994) and Brown (1998), refer to the essential role of language testing in second language acquisition research, where language tests are utilised as instruments for gathering language data. Bachman (1990) also refers to numerous uses of language tests in studies of SLA which ‘generally need indicators of the amount of language acquired... and these indicators commonly include language tests’ (ibid., p. 67-68).

The IS test used in this study contains discourse completion tasks and judgment tasks, and the grammar test used in this study contains multiple-choice tasks (as mentioned above), which gather data about the competence of the second language, English. These tasks have been broadly used in the area of second language research to ‘test the ability of the learners’ (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989, p.177). Sharwood Smith (1994, p. 78) describes a similar point of view when considering these tasks as ‘perhaps the most essential test of linguistic intuitions utilised with L2 learners and with native speakers.’

Mandell (1999) mentions that many researchers have investigated ‘methodological issues linked to the use of discourse completion tasks, judgment tasks and multiple-choice tasks in SLA research’ (ibid, p.74-75). Mandell claims that the way to understand the linguistic knowledge is through learners’ performance’ which is the major interest of this research. As Odlin (1994, p. 273) and Ellis (1994, p. 613) point out, some researchers investigate learning outcomes by various means, including judgment tasks or multiple-choice questions. Ellis (1994, p. 705) states that these tasks are utilised to acquire data on what learners know about

the target language by asking them to judge whether they think that particular sentences are acceptable or not. On the other hand, other researchers use other ways of investigating the judgments by asking participants to make their own judgment as in discourse completion tasks. Ellis (1994) argues that the reason that researchers prefer these approaches is that it helps them to obtain information about the learners' intuitions that reflect their internal knowledge. This fact is additionally supported by Schütze (1996, p. 96) who mentions that judgment data from L2 learners 'have been utilised in investigating the relationship between knowledge (competence) and judgment'. Other researchers express the value of completion tasks as a tool reflecting competence. Cook (1996) states that completion tasks are a type of performance indirectly related to knowledge (competence).

The tests were used in this study as a form of paper-based tests that included different tasks (discourse completion tasks, judgment tasks and multiple-choice tasks). These tests allowed the researcher to get behavioural and factual data about the learners (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 8). The discourse completion tasks and judgment tasks were used in IS tests to elicit intuitions from the participants about the acceptability and usage of certain structures and so to test their knowledge about English IS. Additionally, the multiple-choice task was used in order to test students' grammatical performance.

A number of factors were considered in designing the tests (the grammar test and IS test), in order to strengthen the reliability and the validity of these tests in this study. One of considerations was giving L2 learners enough time to answer the exam questions, as a shortage of time might be considered as a factor that affects performance. Hamp-Lyons (1996, p.154) claims 'the speeded tests disadvantage second language learners'. Counterbalancing was another factor to prevent any influence of the order in the grammar tests or IS tests. In other words, different forms of the same test (say form A, B and C of a test) had been distributed to

the same group of L2 learners. Thus, the learners did not see the tests in the same order. This was noted by Brown (1998, p. 99) who mentions that ‘the reliability can be estimated by administering two equivalent tests (different versions of the same test) to one group of subjects’. Another consideration in designing these tests was to avoid any difficult vocabulary or being too complex with long structures that would be difficult for participants to understand. Difficult structures in tests may affect on their results and, as Schütze (1996, p136) mentions, ‘due to misunderstanding structures, our initial judgment tend to be negative.’

Moreover, all tests were read by two Arab and English specialists in English and with the researcher’s adviser in order to provide the researcher with some comments and feedback on the test constructions, and whether or not the layout needed revision. For instance, if there were some difficult/ ambiguous words that should be replaced by easy/ simple one, or if there was a need for more space in order to answer. The layout of the test played a part in generating valid and reliable information (Dörnyei, 2007). The researcher’s adviser informed the researcher about whether these tests were set up to measure what they were intended. Furthermore, the test, particularly the IS test, was provided in both languages, the first language and target language, in order to prevent any misunderstanding which might affect the accuracy of responses (Dörnyei, 2003). Furthermore, all texts in discourse completion tasks and pragmalinguistic judgment tasks were expected to be familiar for both native and non-native speakers, thereby ensuring full understanding for both elicitation tasks. Also, they contained illustrative items for each task to insure participants’ full understanding (Barron, 2003).

In the next section the two instruments of the qualitative phase (reflective journals and interviews) will be further discussed.

4.5.2 The Qualitative Phase

This qualitative study utilised the reflective teaching journals written by the ESL teachers and the researcher during teaching. After that, audio recordings of in-depth interviews were conducted with the teachers. The ESL teachers used their reflective journals in order to answer the interview questions (see Appendix F). Hence, in this study, the teachers' reflective journal is a window through which the interviews and research questions are answered (Claire McGuinness and Michelle Brien, 2007).

The interviews and the reflective journals ensure the validity of the L2 learners' results from the quantitative phase, obtain a deep explanation about the differences between including and precluding IS in ESL classes and explore the current situation regarding IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia. The two tools of the qualitative phase the reflective journals and interviews will be discussed in detail next.

4.5.2.1 Reflective Journals

A reflective journal is a piece of writing created by researchers or participants in practical settings that constitutes a source of qualitative research (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Many studies have used reflective journals as a tool to reflect on students' learning in different fields, such as education (Porto, 2007; Wallace and Oliver, 2003), business (Pavolvich, Collins, and Jones, 2009) and language learning (Carson and Longhini, 2002; Porto, 2007). A reflective journal is one instrument for collecting data in qualitative studies (Janesick, 1999), is utilised heavily in the behavioural sciences and is considered an efficient method gaining information about humans' feelings and thoughts that cannot be directly observed (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007).

The data from the reflective journals present what happens when implementing any program or change as the participants' perceptions of these changes (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). Since this type of data is explained from a subjective human perspective, it allowed the researcher in this study to explore difficulties and the successes related to IS instruction in ESL classrooms.

Reflective journals were used in this study as a research tool that included classroom and curriculum observations. Some of the strengths of using reflective teaching journals in classrooms are that they (1) allow the researcher to explore teaching processes (i.e., IS instruction) in a naturalistic setting; (2) verify changes that occurred post-instruction; and (3) give more detailed and accurate evidence than other data collection methods (i.e., presenting new materials, conducting daily and weekly reviews related to learners' performance and providing feedback and correctives about instruction) (Cohen et al., 2006). Many researchers (see Carson and Longhini, 2002; Wallace and Oliver, 2003; Thorpe, 2004) advocate using reflective journals along with classroom observations because the journals aid in the exploration of learners' performance and teachers' effectiveness.

After the ESL teachers signed the consent form to participate in the study (see Appendix B), they were asked to write some of their views and thoughts while teaching IS in their reflective teaching journals throughout the semester. Consequently, they wrote about their experiences in the ESL classes, including their successes and difficulties, all the activities and exercises they used and any insights they had about their students. The researcher also kept a reflective journal in which she documented the current state of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia. She also documented all of the teaching methods and materials (activities) she used (i.e., poems, stories and letters; see Appendix I) as well as her perspective on students' improvement before the end of the semester. All the reflective journals were collected and carefully read by both

the researcher and the ESL teachers in order to enhance the credibility of the research (see 4.5.3).

4.5.2.2 Interviews

Interviews are normally a tool for gathering data in qualitative research that is utilised to create the interactive discussion between the researchers and participants of the study (Fasick, 2001) and considered a valuable tool to supplement other data collection methods (Faerch and Kasper, 1987; Gass and Mackey, 2000). Similar to reflective journals, Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 172) argue that the interviews help the researcher illustrate phenomena that cannot be directly observed such as human insights and opinions. Also, Dörnyei (2007) states that the purpose of the interview is mainly heuristic that it explains and develops concepts through the subjective eyes of the participants. Interviews are usually consisted of open-ended questions so that in-depth information is collected. These open-ended questions help researchers explain, better understanding and explore research participants' behaviors, opinions and experiences (Gass and Mackey, 2000).

Interviewing was used in this study as a research tool that included oral questioning of the participants (Neuman, 1997). Through interviews, the researcher had the possibility of deviating from the interview questions, which turns data into meaningful information (Dörnyei, 2007), such as requesting the interviewee to explain or clarify their responses if their responses were ambiguous or off-topic. This kind of interview is called a semi-structure interview. The flexibility of deviation from the interview questions helps in gathering information that may be more useful in answering the research questions (Dörnyei, 2007) and allows for the possibility of unintentionally providing some essential insights (Adler and Adler, 1998). Hence, this type

of interview was the suitable choice because the ESL teachers' interviews were about their opinions and experiences in a guided way (Richards, 2001).

The interview form included two parts (see Appendix F); the first part gathered data about the ESL teachers' background, such as what level of learning they teach, and their experience in teaching in the ESL classrooms. This type of data may help in determining the credibility of their answers (Dörnyei, 2007). In the second section, the ESL teachers were asked eight open-ended questions about the importance of teaching IS of the target language. Also, they were asked about the developments as well as the challenges that they observed when teaching. In addition, they were asked about the most efficient methods and techniques they believed could be utilised to help learning processes, and to add any further opinions or comments.

Lastly, like the reflective journals data, all the interview data were carefully read by both the researcher and the ESL teachers in order to enhance the credibility of the research, which will be discussed next.

4.5.3 The Use of Reflective Journals and Interviews in SLA Research

This section illustrates the use of the two qualitative instruments, reflective journals and interviews, in SLA research. It discusses the advantages of implementing these instruments in SLA research. It additionally presents a number of factors which were considered to gain accurate results from the interviews and the reflective journals of this study, in order to enhance the reliability and the validity of these qualitative tools.

More recently, reflective journals have been frequently used to find useful language-learning techniques. For example, Carson and Longhini (2002) used reflective journals in Spanish courses to explore L2 learners' use of learning strategies. Similarly, Halbach (2000) used

reflective journals in an English course to examine how L2 learners utilised learning strategies and how these strategies affected their learning. These two studies explained how L2 teachers were able to observe students' learning processes through reflective journals, and information gathered from these journals helped improve L2 learners' classroom performance. Another study conducted by Davis (2003) investigated the 25 reflective journals of teachers in order to examine their insights and practical experiences that might help new (pre-service) teachers. According to Davis (2003), the data from reflective journals provide major thoughts and insights that are not consistently achieved through other methods of data collection.

No less important than reflective journals, the interviews have been also used within the field of SLA. For example, qualitative interview studies have investigated the following: the linguistic characteristics of second language writing (see Callies, 2006); the syntactic errors made by L2 learners (see Abduljawad, 2015 and Adway, 2013); and the perceptions and social structures that L2 learners invoke through language (see Callies, 2009).

Numerous other studies (i.e., Park, 2003; Moon, 2006; Watson, 2010; Bisman, 2011) refer to the importance of interviews and reflective journals in humanities research, particularly in L2 research, and indicate many advantages of using reflective journals and interviews in SLA. One advantage is that this type of data gives researchers a chance to examine L2 teachers' perspectives on the challenges they experience as a part of their practical experience, which in turn helps improve the teaching and learning of the target language (Dunlap, 2006; Moon, 2006). Another advantage is, as Ellis (2004) states, 'exploring some kinds of linguistic difficulties faced by L2 learners in the use of a second language' (ibid., p. 262). Furthermore, reflective journals and interviews often serve a gateway to the development of successful learning processes by creating a relationship between SLA theory and practice (O'Connell and

Dyment, 2011); researchers can prove or disprove theories about IS instruction in their reflective teaching journals and interviews.

Based on the data from the ESL teachers' and the researcher's experiences and impressions provided from reflective journals and interviews, the present study attempted to examine IS instruction and discover how language teaching can be made more effective. Consequently, the use of reflective journals and interviews helped the researcher to understand the ESL teachers' views on the importance of IS instruction, to establish a thorough overview of the current state of IS (discourse pragmatics) in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia and to develop a deeper understanding of L2 learners' performance in discourse completion and judgment tasks (as noted in 4.5.2).

To ensure that the interviews were correctly conducted, certain procedures were followed: First, the ESL teachers were informed beforehand by the researchers about the nature of the interview. In addition, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study (as noted in 4.4) and how the findings of this study might improve the quality of teaching in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the interviewees (the ESL teachers) were informed that they were free to select the language, either in their first language or target language, in which the interview was to be carried out (Kasper, 2000, 337f). Furthermore, they were asked very clear and direct questions and they were given a chance to explain their opinions openly and freely. Additionally, the researcher tried to reduce her role to the minimum to prevent leading the interviewees and biases, which as Creswell (2007, p. 61) says, 'The bias of the researcher could reduce the value of the research'. The researcher tried to use efficient interview techniques (such as keeping her personal opinions in check, avoiding leading questions and utilising appropriate body language). Also, the researcher attempted to be as friendly as possible with the interviewees by illustrating to them that their responses were only for the purposes of the study and they could

withdraw or decline the interview whenever they liked (see Appendix B). Moreover, the researcher tried to make participants comfortable and appeared interested in what they say. In addition to that, the time and the date of the interviews, during June 2018, were chosen as appropriate for the ESL teachers without making this a heavy burden on them. The interviews were conducted independently with every teacher during her lunch break or her time off from work at the library of Taibah University (Yanbu Campus). Each interview lasted for about twenty-five to thirty minutes.

Furthermore, to ensure the information in the reflective teaching journals was accurate and correct. Similar to the ESL teachers, the L2 learners were also informed about the aim of the study and how the results of this study might benefit English learning in Saudi Arabia. They were informed that all information gathered would be confidential and would only be used for the research purpose (see 4.4 of this study). Most importantly, they were informed that their participation in the research as well as their performance on the research tests will not impact their grades (see Appendix C).

Additionally, the environmental factors of the lecture halls were examined before teaching took place to ensure high-quality classrooms, since it is argued that the classroom environmental parameters such as lighting, ventilation and cleaning influence learners' performance (Zhang et al., 2016). Similarly, the environmental factors of the library were examined from the beginning of the research to provide a comfortable atmosphere for the ESL teachers that helps answer the interview questions accurately.

4.5.4 Some Criteria to Assess the Value of the Research

Reliability and validity are the assessment criteria in quantitative research. Nevertheless, because this study follows the interpretive paradigm, which relies mostly on the qualitative research characteristics (as noted in 4.3 of this study), there are other assessment criteria to assess the value of the research. For instance, dependability is similar to reliability in the quantitative phase which means all methods used in the study produce consistent and stable findings (Brown, 2004), credibility which is internal validity parallel to show that all the objectives and findings in the study are related to each other in the study (Richards, 2003), confirmability where the results are confirmed with those of other people or other studies (Creswell, 2003) and finally transferability which is the range in which the results are able to be transferred to another situation (Mackey and Gass, 2005).

In order to accomplish the dependability in the research findings, there was a methodological triangulation (as stated in 4.3), which is the use of various research methods, such as tests, interviews and reflective teaching journals, in order to cross-check the data methods (Mackey and Gass, 2005).

A pilot study was conducted in order to maximise the usefulness of the quantitative and qualitative data (Mackey & Gass, 2005) which enhances the credibility (validity) of the data (Dörnyei, 2007). Hence, the tests were applied to an ESL class (N=20) at the same university in Saudi Arabia, Taibah University (Yanbu Campus). This sample (N=20) had nearly the same features as the target sample. One of the reasons for conducting a pilot study is that it gives advance information about whether the study tools or strategies are incorrect or complicated and to test the efficiency of the research tools so as to determine the feasibility of the research. It was observed that all L2 learners finished the tests within the allocated time. Findings of the pilot phase revealed that all the items in the tests were appropriate to extracting the required

data. The interviews were successfully conducted with the six ESL teachers and they supported the researcher with necessary data for her to draw the preliminary findings, which could prove the validity of the research tools.

Moreover, there was a ‘member validation’ where the participants were provided with the interpretation of the data and the results (Richards, 2003, p. 287). For example, the researcher gave the interested ESL teachers feedback on their performance and shared the study findings with them so that they could decide whether to agree with this study or not; member checking enhances the credibility of the research. Dörnyei (2007) argues that the researcher should not misinterpret data and the findings. Hence, member checking was also helpful to enhance the integrity of the research (Richards, 2003), as the researcher showed the participants the interpretation of the data and the results in order to avoid any wrong interpretations. Moreover, peer debriefing was made, the researcher’s supervisor reviewed the research methodology and his comments were added, to ensure credibility of the study (as noted in 4.5.1.4).

Additionally, the readers were provided with a ‘thick description’ in order to give them a chance to decide whether the results from this study could be transferred or applied to different contexts or not (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p.180). Thus, the ‘thick description’ ensures the transferability in this study. The interpretations of the data were provided in as much detail as possible to let the readers understand everything in the study, and hence, construct the confirmability criteria. Finally, the study was compared with various studies, such as the ‘Information highlighting in advanced learner English: The syntax-pragmatics interface in SLA’ (Callies, 2009) in order to ensure the validity (confirmability) of the study.

4.5.5 Administrating the Current Study

As previously mentioned (see 4.3 of this study), the study was conducted in three phases: pre-experimental, experimental, and post-experimental. Each of these stages are included in the tests and in the interviews in Appendix F, G and H.

4.5.5.1 Pre-Experimental Phase (Phase 1)

In January 2018, a group of native English speakers were tested at the Islamic Centre in Manchester, UK. They were given the IS test (see Appendix H) so their answers could be compared with those of second language learners, since pragmalinguistic tests do not involve right and wrong answers like grammar tests⁸⁵. The results of this evaluation are illustrated in Chapter 5.

At the beginning of the 2018 academic semester (January 2018), the L2 learners (pre-experimental groups) in stage One and stage Two were given two tests: one was similar to the native speakers' test (see Appendix H) and the other involved English grammar (see Appendix G). These tests were used to explore the relationship between IS competence and grammatical competence in SLA and examine whether IS competence is independent of the grammatical competence. All of these tests were conducted in lecture halls at Taibah University (Yanbu Campus) in Saudi Arabia.

The IS tests conducted before the teaching process (the experimental phase) to examine L2 learners' pragmalinguistic competence before they were taught pragmalinguistic structures. In relation to the efficiency of this approach, Bachman (2004) mentions that 'a researcher needs

⁸⁵For more details about the third group, see 4.4 of this study.

to use a language test before and after an experimental treatment as a gauge for measuring language learning' (ibis., p. 166). In this study, the L2 learners were evaluated both before and after teaching to enable a comparison between their pre-experimental and post-experimental responses. The results of these two evaluations are demonstrated and illustrated in Chapter 5.

4.5.5.2 The Experimental Phase (Phase 2)

Phase 2 began directly after the administration of the grammar and pragmalinguistic tests. This phase involved examining a large number of learning materials to see whether they referenced 'information structure' or dealt in-depth with the syntactic constructions used to achieve information structure. The researcher documented the results of this ESL curricula review in a reflective journal, and these results are explained in the following chapter (see 5.3 of this study). Furthermore, this phase also included teaching information structure to L2 learners (experimental groups) in S1 and S2 and using reflective teaching journals to document all teaching methods (explicit and implicit) and materials (i.e., poems and letters) used during teaching, since one of the objectives of this study was to improve the L2 learners' learning experience and help them acquire the target language more effectively. The information structure instruction was conducted in lecture halls at Taibah University (Yanbu Campus) in Saudi Arabia.

Twenty L2 learners (experimental group) from each stage (S1 and S2) were taught discourse pragmatics within the university-required syllabus. As referenced in 4.2 of this study, one of the aims of this study was to compare L2 learners' performance before and after teaching to investigate whether teaching was a useful tool in helping L2 learners acquire the discourse pragmatics of the target language. The examination of learning materials and the IS instruction took place over six weeks from February 2018–March 2018.

During the teaching period, the research design involved using different activities based on a discourse-focused approach (see 3.5) in order to help L2 learners notice the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. The research design also involved using implicit methods of teaching first followed by explicit methods of teaching ⁸⁶. Then, different authentic materials were used to increase the learners' awareness about IS (see Appendix J).

Thus, L2 learners first dealt with literary texts, such as poems (see Appendix I, Part 1) in which the syntactic realisation of information structure categories abounds, to help them notice how information is foregrounded or emphasised. The researcher was interested in observing how L2 learners were able to identify and describe writers' use of information structure categories such as Topic and Focus without engaging the L2 learners in straightforward syntactic IS questions i.e., explicit teaching of terminology and rules. Next, the L2 learners were explicitly taught pragmalinguistic structures along with explanations and examples. The L2 learners were then given some written texts based on real situations similar to the real situations in the discourse completion tasks used in the pragmalinguistic tests (for similar exercises, see Appendix H, Section A; Katz, 2000, p. 260; Sammon, 2002, p. 23) and were asked to answer questions related to these situations. The L2 learners were also given pragmatically odd written texts and were asked to re-write these texts to make them sound more natural (see Appendix I, Part 2). All these different tasks⁸⁷ are considered valuable means for exploring L2 learners' explicit competence in the pragmatic characteristics of a target language (Ellis, 2004, p. 264). We used implicit methods to focus on context and meaning (van Lier, 2001, p. 162) and explicit methods to explain and draw attention to difficult structures, such as the rules of preposing;

⁸⁶ For more details about explicit and implicit methods of teaching, see 3.5 of this study.

⁸⁷ All these teaching materials are explained in detail in 5.3 of this study.

these methods help explain formal and functional aspects of language in ESL classrooms and lead to stable knowledge and language competence.

The ESL teachers were also asked to teach information structure to their students outside of the research sample. Hence, they taught the English pragmalinguistic structures at Taibah university branch campuses that they work in and documented their observations in reflective teaching journals for use in answering the subsequent interview questions. All their responses are illustrated in the following chapter.

After finishing the teaching period, all L2 learners (experimental groups) in both stages were tested again at the end of March 2018. They were given the same IS tests to explore whether the experimental group's post-teaching responses were different from their pre-teaching responses. The same test was used to examine the L2 learners' knowledge of discourse pragmatics after the experiment and see whether the instruction had improved their pragmalinguistic competence. The results of these tests are explained in the following chapter. This analysis involved a comparison between L2 learners' performance on the pre-teaching and post-teaching IS tests in the experimental groups.

At the end of May 2018, all L2 learners (S1 and S2) in the experimental groups were tested for a third time using the same information structure tests to see whether their final responses differed from their previous responses; this also tested the stability of second language IS. As mentioned earlier (see 4.2 of this study), this study aims to explore the usefulness of teaching in building stable L2 knowledge of IS. The stability of this knowledge was explored by testing L2 learners in the experimental groups after a period of time to see whether their pragmalinguistic knowledge was retained. The results of this testing process are displayed in Chapter 5, the next chapter.

It is important to mention that the sample of the students in each stage was 40 students in the pre-experimental phase. However, this sample was reduced to 20 students in the experimental stage due to the university constraints.

4.5.5.3 Post-Experimental Phase (Phase 3)

After the experimental phase was completed, the qualitative phase, which consisted of interviews with ESL teachers from different Taibah University branch campuses in Saudi Arabia, began in June 2018. The interviews were conducted at the library of Taibah University (Yanbu Campus) during the teachers' lunch break or their time off from work. Each interview lasted for approximately twenty-five to thirty minutes⁸⁸. Next, the data-analysis stage began. The researcher marked the L2 learners' responses and then compared their results to investigate their performance during the different phases of the experiment. Later the researcher analysed the data from the qualitative materials⁸⁹ (interviews and reflective journals). All the stages of the study are illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Administrating the current study.

Phases	Period	Details
Pre-experimental phase	The third week of January 2018	Native English speakers were administered the IS test.
	The fourth week of January 2018	L2 learners (pre-experimental groups) in both stages took the IS and the grammar tests.

⁸⁸For more details the interviews, see 4.5.2.2 and 4.5.3.

⁸⁹The data analysis is explained in the next chapter.

Experimental phase	Period1:From February to the middle of March 2018 (6 weeks)	Three concurrent activities occurred: learning material were examined; L2 learners in the experimental groups were given IS instruction; ESL teachers taught their students. All the researcher's and the teachers' observations were documented on their reflective journals.
	Period2: End of March 2018	All students (S1 and S2) in the experimental groups were tested a second time using the same IS test.
	Period 3: End of May 2018	All students (S1 and S2) in the experimental groups were tested a third time using the same IS test.
Post-experimental phase	Beginning of June 2018	ESL teachers' interviews were conducted.

4.5.6 Data Analysis Methods

Overall, the study includes five main comparisons. The first comparison is between Arabic IS and English IS from the standpoint of Arabic and English literature (see chapter two of this study). Comparing the structures of both languages, Arabic and English, helps researchers understand some of the challenges learner face in acquiring the L2 (Lado, 1971; see Figure 4.3).

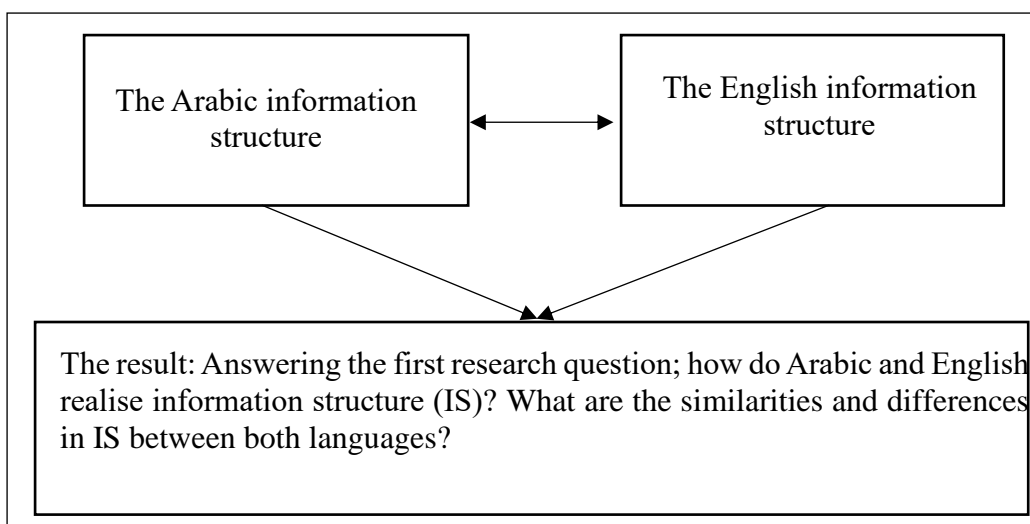


Figure 4.3: Comparing Arabic IS with English IS.

The second comparison is both internal—L2 learners’ performances on pragmalinguistic tests (in the pre-experimental groups; S1 and S2) compared with each other—and external—their performance compared with that of native English speakers’ (see Figure 4.4).

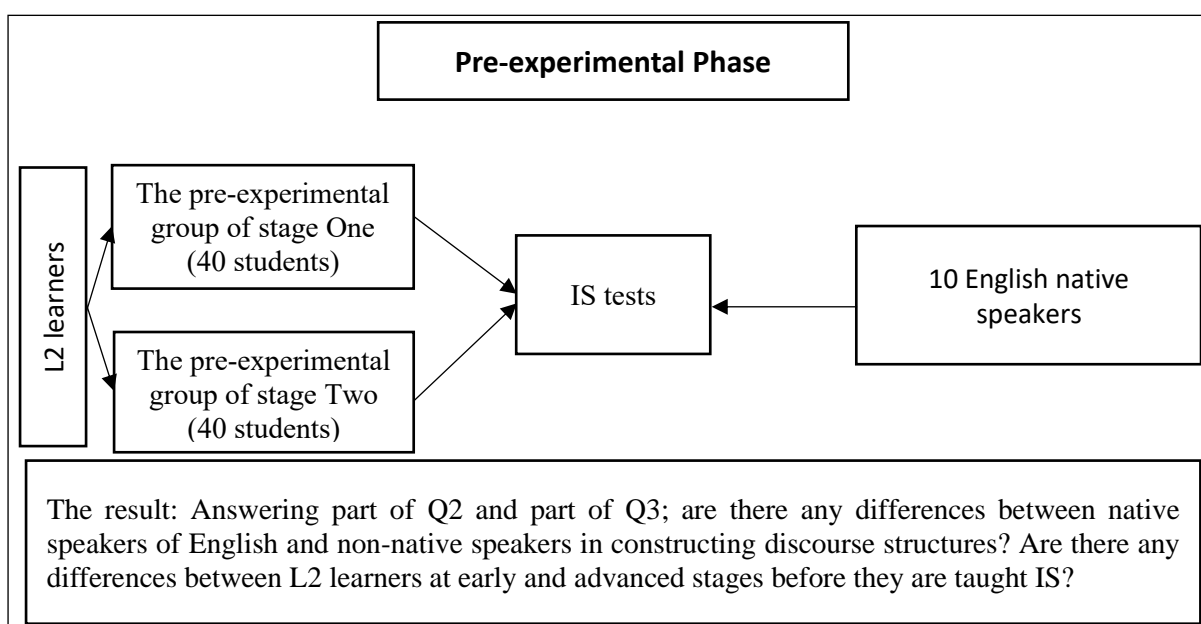


Figure 4.4: Comparing participants’ performance internally and externally.

The third comparison occurs between L2 learners' pragmalinguistic performance and their grammatical performance at each stage in the pre-experimental groups. Their results on both the grammar and pragmalinguistic tests were examined to explore whether students who are good at grammar also good at information structure and vice versa (see Figure 4.5).

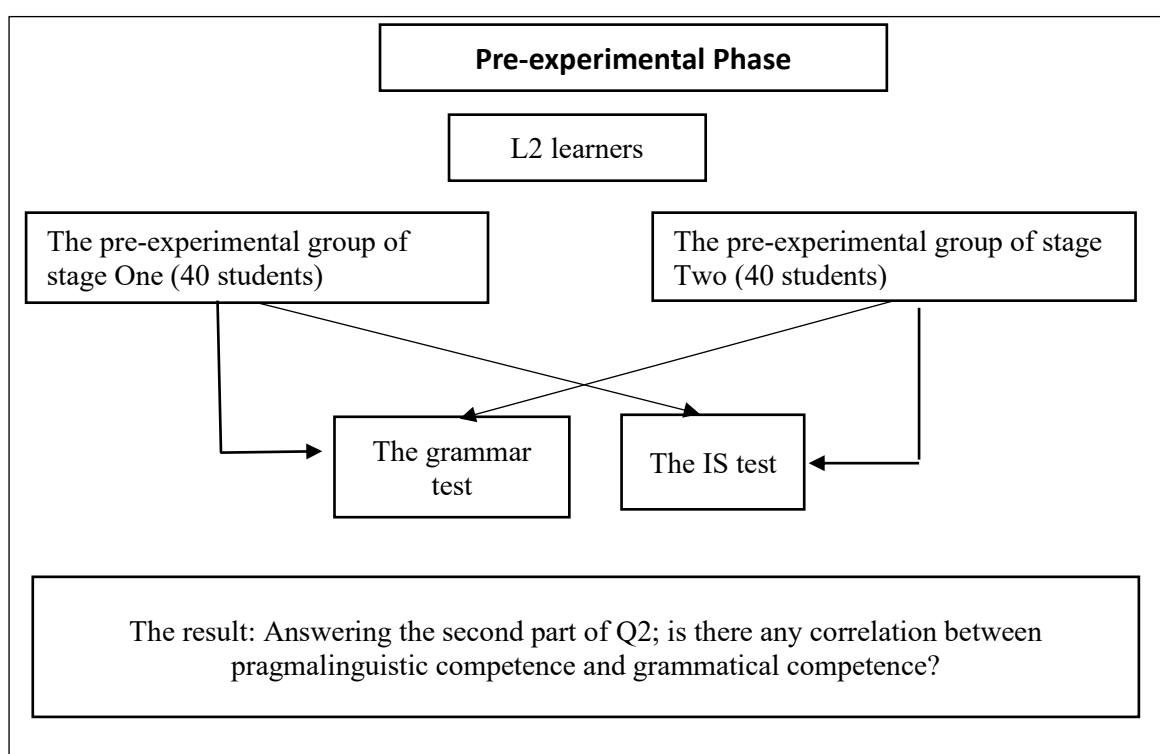


Figure 4.5: Comparing the learners' pragmalinguistic competence with their grammatical competence.

The fourth comparison is both internal—L2 learners' performances (at each stage in the experimental groups) on the pre-teaching IS tests compared with their performance on the same tests post-teaching—and external—S1 learners' performance compared with that of S2 learner' performance on the pre- and post-teaching IS tests. This comparison helps explore the effectiveness of IS instruction in SLA by investigating whether students' post-teaching results

are better than their pre-teaching results (see Figure 4.6). In addition to that, the ESL teachers' interviews and reflective journals offer a deeper explanation on the effectiveness of teaching the syntactic constructions used to achieve information structure.

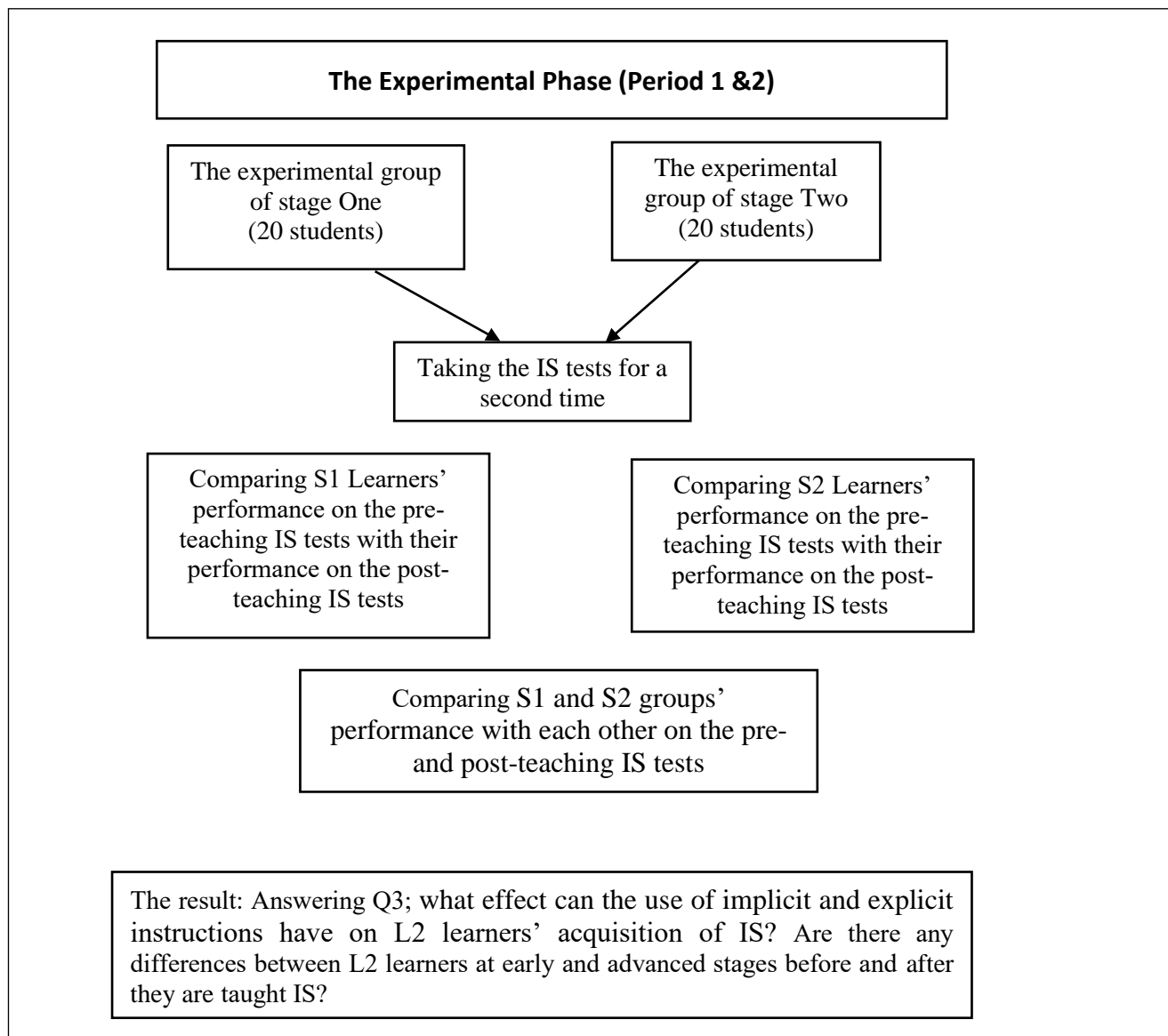


Figure 4.6: Comparing L2 learners' performance pre- and post-teaching.

The fifth comparison is made between L2 learners' post-teaching performance at each stage on the IS tests with their performance on the same tests after a set period of time (two months post-teaching). This comparison helps check whether the knowledge L2 learners acquired from teaching remained stable in their minds (see Figure 4.7).

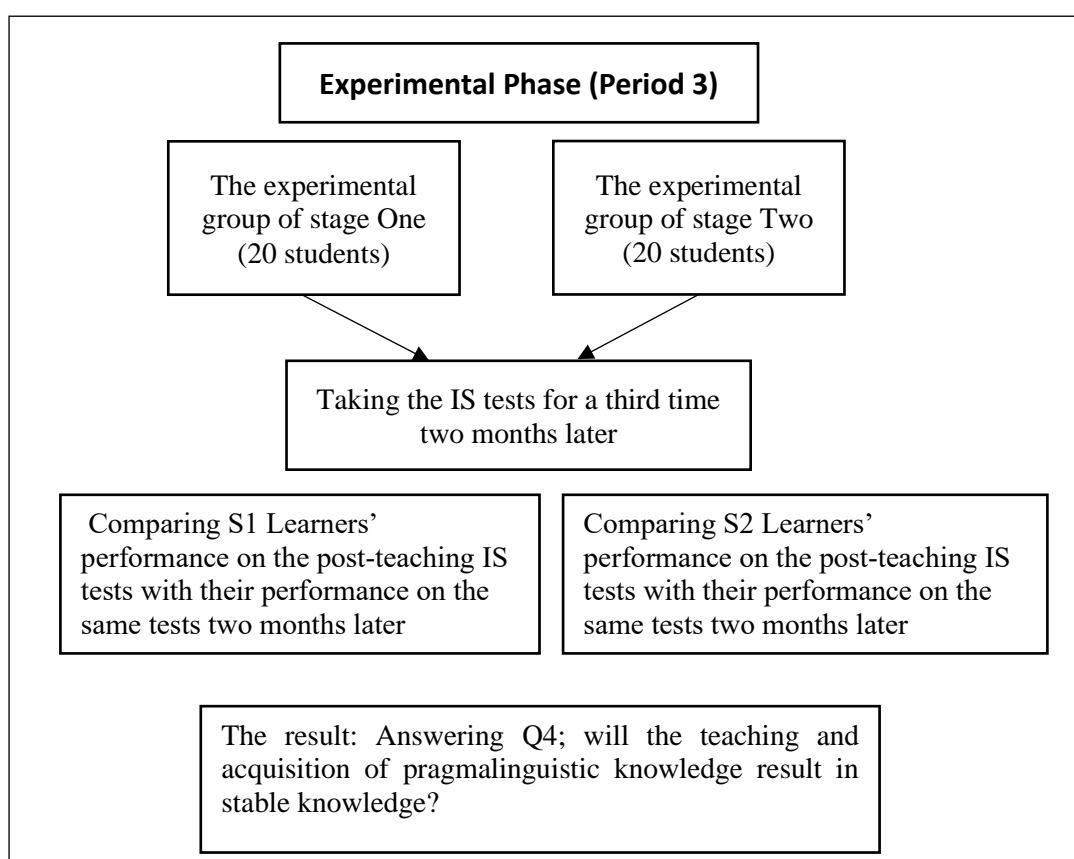


Figure 4.7: Comparing the learners' post-teaching IS test performance with their performance on the same tests two months later.

The first comparison is made bibliographically through the literature (see Chapter 2). The other four comparisons contain different kinds of tests, so their results were examined quantitatively using Microsoft Excel. All participants' test responses were entered as percentages and then compared for research purposes (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 37; see Chapter 5 of this study).

The data from the reflective journals and interviews were coded and transcribed to categories in accordance with the study questions (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). The themes that appeared in the reflective journals and interviews helped the researcher explore the meanings of the texts (Seidel & Kelle, 1995) and compare the results of the reflective journals and interviews with the results from the tests (see 5.3 of this study). This type of analysis provides rich and detailed data and confirms the previous tests' findings (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989).

The data analysis for both the quantitative methods and the qualitative methods is presented in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Findings

The following section will discuss quantitative findings from the pragmalinguistic test (the discourse completion task and the judgment task) and the grammar test. First, the L2 learners' and native speakers' performance on the IS tests will be analysed (i.e., frequency counts of syntactic devices). Next, the learners' responses on the grammar tests and the pragmatic tests will be compared. Four total comparisons are made in this chapter: comparing native speakers' (NSs) responses with that of L2 learners on the pre-teaching pragmalinguistic tests; comparing stage One (S1) learners' responses with stage Two (S2) learners' responses for both tests the grammar test and the pragmalinguistic test; comparing native speakers' responses with L2 learners on the post-teaching paralinguistic tests; and comparing L2 learners' responses on the post-teaching pragmalinguistic tests with their responses on the same tests two months post-teaching.

After analysing the quantitative data, the qualitative findings from reflective journals and interviews will be presented, concentrating particularly on the importance of teaching IS in the ESL classroom, the current situation of IS in ESL curricula and whether the ESL teachers teach pragmalinguistic structures in Saudi Arabia.

In this section, the grammar test and pragmalinguistic test, which consists of the discourse completion task and pragmalinguistic judgment task, will be analysed, followed by a demonstration of the qualitative findings.

5.1 The Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

The data analysis in the discourse completion task is divided into three sections: L2 learners' pre-teaching knowledge; L2 learners' post-teaching knowledge; and L2 learners' post-teaching knowledge after two months.

5.1.1 L2 learners' pre-teaching Knowledge Teaching

The first quantitative analysis shows how NSs and L2 learners in both stages realised IS categories syntactically in the discourse completion task in order to answer the second research question in this study (How do Saudi ESL learners perform regarding their realisation of English IS compared to native English speakers?). Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 show that, pre-teaching, L2 learners used significantly more basic word orders while native English speakers displayed higher frequency rates for the use of non-canonical patterns compared to L2 learners.

For the purpose of numerical accuracy, two categories—Focus and Topic—were presented which were expected to be used by participants (for similar categories on linguistic grounds, see Butler, 1985, p. 117; Woods et al., 1986, p. 144).

1. Topic: this IS category has a topicalisation (topic fronting) device that carries pragmatic meaning, such as correcting or emphasising (see 2.3.3).
2. Focus: this IS category is divided into contrastive focus and information focus:
 - a. Contrastive focus: this includes three devices: 1) wh-clefts, which present the emphasised information in the final position; 2) it-and reverse clefts, which display the focused constituent in sentence-initial position; and 3) preposing (focus fronting), which also displays the focused constituent in sentence-initial position (see 2.3.1.4).

- b. Information focus: this shows the difference between Given and New information in a sentence and presents the broad and narrow focuses that all languages have (see 2.3.1.1.).

Table 5.1: The use of canonical and non-canonical word orders pre-teaching.

The Discourse Completion Task				
IS (device used)	80 ESL learners’ results pre-teaching IS			10 Native speakers’ results
	Stage 1 40 learners (%)	Stage 2 40 learners (%)	Total of Stage 1 & stage 2	
Topics				
a. Topics for clarification				
Q4				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	6 (60%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)
Q12				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	7 (70%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
b. Topics for correction				
Q3				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	7 (70%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
Q8				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	6 (60%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)
Contrastive Focus				
a. CF for correction				
Q2				
Canonical word orders	35 (87.5%)	37 (92.5%)	72 (90%)	9 (90%)
Preposing	5 (12.5%)	3 (7.5%)	8 (10%)	1 (10%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q6				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	3 (30%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (60%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q14				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	0 (0%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (70%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
b. Contrastive Focus for exclusiveness/clarification				
Q7				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	6 (60%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q9				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	5 (50%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (50%)
Q11				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	4 (40%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)
Q15				
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	7 (70%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)
Q16				

Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	80 (100%)	7 (70%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)

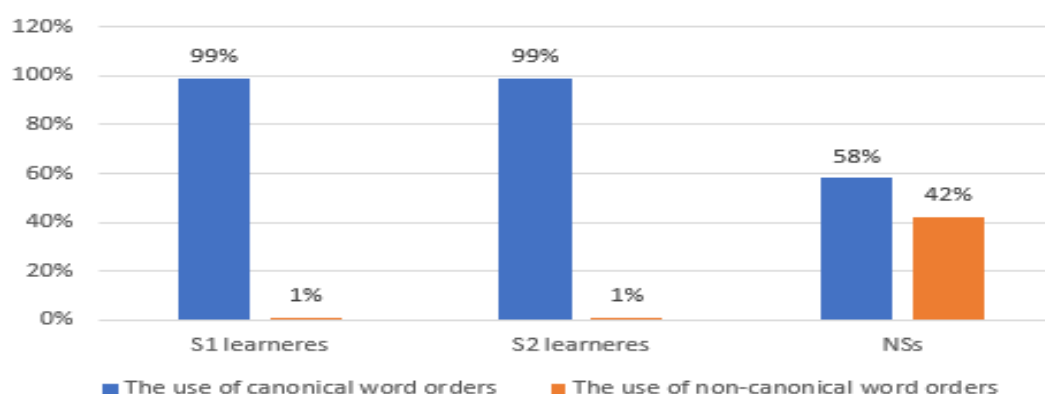


Figure 5.1: Cumulative pre-teaching performance.

Highly interesting and significant differences emerged between the NSs and L2 learners (S1 and S2) in their use of pragmalinguistic structures. While few L2 learners in both stages used non-canonical word orders, more NSs used them (see Figure 5.1). In particular, while neither S1 nor S2 students used topicalisation and clefted structures, some of the NSs used them (see Figure 5.2). This may tentatively be interpreted as the result of L2 learners' lack of awareness about the pragmalinguistic structures of English (see 3.3.2). Consequently, unlike NSs, L2 learners preferred to use safe word orders in both stages.

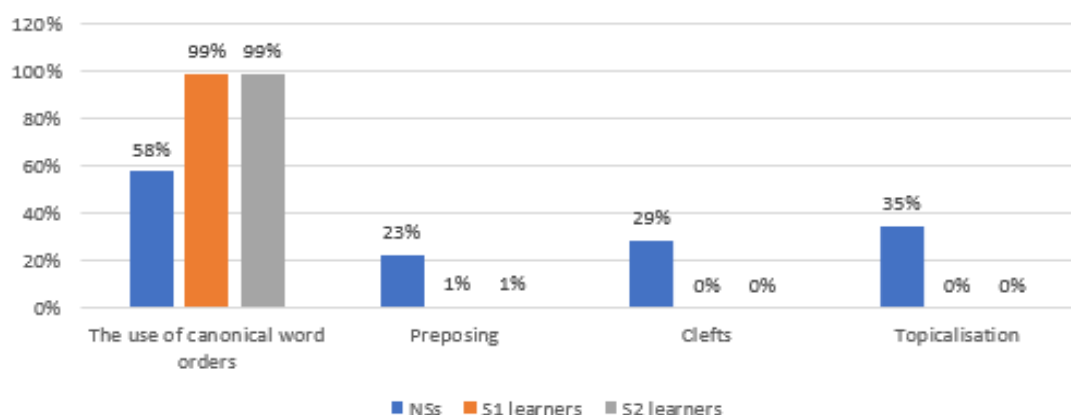


Figure 5.2: The syntactic devices used by participants to achieve IS.

Native speakers use Topic and Focus at different frequency for both contrast and clarification (see Table 5.1). When topicalisation is used by NSs, it is almost equally distributed between contrast and clarification (see Figure 5.3). It-clefts, however, are used almost exclusively for contrast, while preposed structures are used more for clarification (see Figure 5.4). The same holds for the use of rwh-clefts, with approximately 50% of NSs using rwh-clefts for clarification in Q9 (see Table 5.1), while the wh-clefts were hardly used at all (see Figure 5.4). It is clear that the NSs prefer to use the initial position of discourse to show contrast (i.e., by using it-clefts, preposing and rwh-clefts); this could explain why the wh-clefts were hardly used. Some typical examples for preposing, it-clefts, rwh-clefts and topicalisation used by the NSs are shown in (5.1).

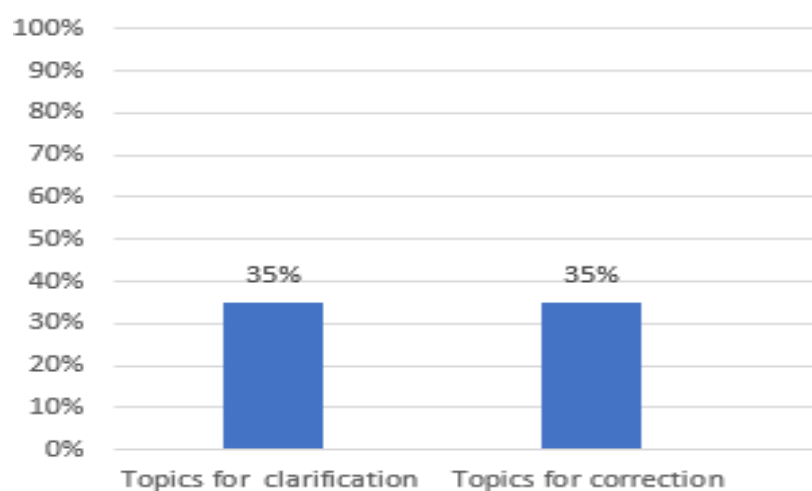


Figure 5.3: Native speakers' use of topicalisation (topic fronting).

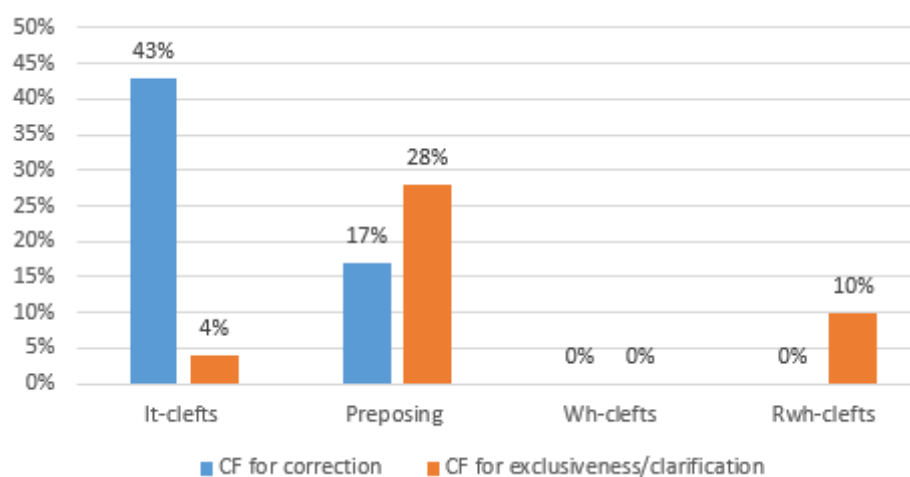


Figure 5.4: Native speakers' use of CF devices.

(5.1)

Situation 14: My Maths teacher I do not like her but I respect her

Preposing

Situation 16: A burger I ordered please.

Preposing

Situation 6: It was Wonder.	It-clefts
Situation 14: It is the Maths teacher.	It-clefts
Situation 9: Sara was the one who made the cake.	Rwh-clefts
Situation 4: . . . the chicken Sara finished it all.	Topicalisation
Situation 8: . . . books about animals I read a lot.	Topicalisation

In contrast, most of the L2 learners' answers in both stages centred on known basic word orders to present the respective information. As pointed above, pragmalinguistic constructions such as clefted structures and topicalisation were hardly used at all (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

For the information focus, both NSs and L2 learners showed very similar frequency distributions for the use of canonical word orders to present both a broad and narrow focus (see Table 5.2). All the L2 learners' responses (S1 and S2) were almost like the NSs' responses. This result is consistent with Klein's and Perdue's (1992) studies which suggested that L2 learners do not acquire basic pragmatic aspects of IS such as 'Topic first' and 'Focus last', since the sequencing of discourse parts is directed by universal IS principles already present in both the L1 and L2 languages (see 3.1.1 and 3.2.1).

Nevertheless, one of the observed differences between the NSs and L2 learners was the NSs used a phrase or a small sentence as an introduction to a sentence and moved the important/new information to the last part of the sentence; this emphasised the idea that end-position⁹⁰ is NSs

⁹⁰For more details about end-focus in English, see 2.3 and Arnold et al. (2000, p. 34).

preferred option for showing prominence (see 2.3.1.4). Some typical examples of the NSs' and learners' responses are presented in (5.2).

Table 5.2: The use of IF by participants.

	S1 (40 students)	S2 (40 students)	10 NSs
IS categories			
Information Focus (IF)			
Narrow Focus			
Q5			
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	10 (100%)
Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q13			
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	10 (100%)
Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Broad Focus			
Q1			
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	10 (100%)
Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q10			
Canonical word orders	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	10 (100%)
Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

(5.2)

Situation 1: Broad Focus (BF)

a. What is this noise?

Native speaker 1: The noise is next door, maybe [_{BF} they are building a tree house].

Native speaker 2: It might be that [_{BF} they are building a tree house].

Learner 1: [_{BF} My neighbour is building a tree house].

Situation 13: Narrow Focus (NF)

a. What is your neighbour building again?

Native speaker 1: This time, she is building [_{NF} a storage room].

Learner 1: Maria is building [_{NF} a storage room].

It is clear that NSs prefer to use the sentence-initial position to mark contrast, as shown in the examples in (5.1). However, if they do not use specific syntactic means for contrast, they tend to place important information in the end-position. This is called the universal patterns of all languages and is shown in the examples in (5.2) above.

Also interesting in the examples in (5.2) is that the NSs used pronouns to present Given⁹¹, while most of the L2 learners in both stages used proper nouns to present Given (i.e., Maria and neighbour). It is important to mention here that Arabic also uses pronouns to present Given; however, L2 learners avoided using pronouns in the L2 as a result of a lack of expectation of such similarity between the two languages and fear the lack of confidence in making any change or amendment which may cause an error.

⁹¹ Given information were written in Italic and underlined in the examples in (5.2)

These findings suggest that L2 learners in S1 and S2 prefer to use safe word orders and also prefer to use proper nouns instead of pronouns in order to avoid any change which may lead them into language errors due to lack of awareness about the information packaging of a second language. These findings are consistent with previous findings (see Leube, 2000; Plag and Zimmermann, 1998)⁹², which suggest that although learners use different pragmalinguistic structures in their L1, they prefer to use canonical word orders of the target language due to lack of confidence in or knowledge of the appropriate use of pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. Plag (1994) also mentions the following:

‘learners tend to avoid some syntactic means typical of their first language when they introduce new referents to the discourse, and utilise the ‘safe’ SVO pattern with a prototypical, agentive subject.’ (ibid, p. 42)

It is likely that the avoidance non-canonical word orders could be interpreted as a result of the interplay between the L1’s influence (see 3.3.2) and typological universals (see 3.2.1), namely subject-prominence, in which is a sentence must have an initial subject, i.e., safe subject-prominent structures like SVO. For example, preposing is frequently used in Arabic, but students prefer to use safe word orders due to the typological universals that depend on SVO order. Also, the lack of pragmalinguistic aspects in ESL curricula leads to learners acquiring the L2 grammatical forms away from their functions (see 3.4). Since L2 learners avoid using the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language, their written productions are different from those of NSs.

The second quantitative analysis presents the comparison between grammatical competence and pragmalinguistic competence in each stage pre-teaching (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4) in order

⁹² See also Chapter 3 of this study.

to answer the second part of the second research question: Is there any correlation between pragmalinguistic competence and grammatical competence?

Table 5.3: Learners' performance on the grammar test.

Students' scores in the grammar test	
S1 learners	42%
S2 learners	76%

Table 5.4: Learners' pre-teaching performance on the IS test.

The pragmalinguistic test	S1 learners	S2 learners
The use of non-canonical word orders	1%	1%
The use of canonical word orders	99%	99%

It is highly interesting that a clear difference appears between learners' grammatical and pragmatic abilities in both stages as shown in the test results (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4 above). Although S2 learners achieved moderate scores on the grammar test, they rarely used non-canonical word orders on the pragmalinguistic test; instead, they preferred to use safe, canonical English word orders (as discussed earlier; see Figure 5.5).

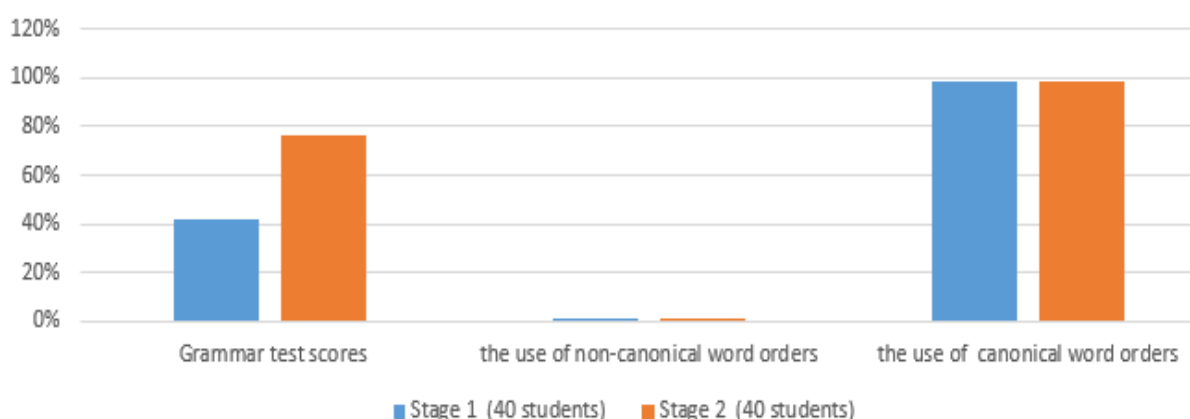


Figure 5.5: Cumulative performance on the grammar test and the IS test pre-teaching.

Furthermore, a closer look at S1 learners' responses on both the grammar and IS tests show that they scored poorly on the grammar test and only used non-canonical word orders 1% of the time on the IS test. This not only indicates that they are novice learners of English but that they also they struggle to package information correctly in different contexts (see Figure 5.5). In fact, this also answers part of the third research question: Are there any differences between L2 learners at early and advanced stages before IS they are taught IS? Both groups' responses before teaching were very similar in terms of the avoidance of non-canonical word orders on the pragmalinguistic test (see Table 5.4 above). This finding is inconsistent with other results (Thompson, 1978; Givón, 1984; Klein and Perdue, 1992)⁹³ which suggest that, unlike L2 learners at early stages, L2 learners at advanced stages are able to use pragmalinguistic structure, indicating a positive correlation between advanced learners and the use of L2 pragmatic structures. However, this study shows no positive correlation between students' performance on grammar tests and their performance on pragmalinguistic tests. High performance in grammar does not make L2 learners' performance similar/close to native

⁹³For more details on Thompson's (1978) and Givón's (1984) hypotheses, see 3.2.1.

English speakers in relation to information packaging. While this is inconsistent with some studies, it is supported by others such as the studies by Plag (1994) and Callies and Keller (2008), which investigate L2 IS in advanced German ESL learners. The findings of these studies suggest that even advanced learners avoid using non-canonical word orders due to the unexpected similarity between the L1 and L2 (see 3.2.1).

As far as the relationship between the grammatical and pragmatic development of interlanguage is considered, the results of this research advocate the second scenario described by Kasper and Rose (2002, p. 147) that ‘grammar precedes pragmatics’ because students acquire L2 grammatical forms before they acquire their pragmalinguistic functions or they acquire the grammatical forms away from their functions (see 3.1 of this study). In other words, the results of this study support ‘the grammar precedes pragmatics scenario’, which suggest that ‘grammatical competence does not facilitate pragmalinguistic use’ (Kasper and Rose, 2002, p. 147), as the L2 students avoided pragmalinguistic structures; even advanced L2 learners demonstrated difficulties registering awareness of the pragmalinguistic structure of the target language. However, a lack of grammatical knowledge could also be a reason for L2 students’ avoidance of these structures, as the grammar test used in this study does not comprehensively cover English structures (see the limitations of the study in 7.1).

It can be concluded that although S2 learners are more advanced in English, than S1 learners, both groups prefer to use safe word orders due to lack of awareness about the discourse pragmatics of English. On the other hand, native English speakers display higher frequency rates for the use of non-canonical patterns compared to L2 learners.

5.1.2 L2 Learners' Knowledge Post-Teaching

Post-teaching, the third quantitative analysis is made between S1 learners, S2 learners and NSs (see Table 5.5) in order to answer the third research question exploring the role of teaching in the acquisition of IS and examining the differences between early and advanced L2 learners post-teaching.

Table 5.5: The use of canonical and non-canonical word orders post-teaching.

	40 ESL learners' results post-teaching IS		The previous results of the 10 NSs ⁹⁴
	Stage 1 (20 learners)	Stage 2 (20 learners)	
Topics			
a. Topics for clarification			
Q4			
Topicalisation	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	12 (60%)	11 (55%)	6 (60%)
Q12			
Topicalisation	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	11 (55%)	11 (55%)	7 (70%)
b. Topics for correction			
Q3			
Topicalisation	7 (35%)	8 (40%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	13 (65%)	12 (60%)	7 (70%)
Q8			
Topicalisation	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	12 (60%)	12 (60%)	6 (60%)
Contrastive Focus			
a. CF for correction			
Q2			
Preposing	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	1 (10%)
Canonical word orders	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	9 (90%)
It-clefts	7 (35%)	8 (40%)	0 (0%)

⁹⁴ See Table 5.1 in 5.1.1 of this study.

Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Q6			
Preposing	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	1 (10%)
Canonical word orders	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	3 (30%)
It-clefts	11 (55%)	11 (55%)	6 (60%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Q14			
Preposing	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
It-clefts	11(55%)	12 (60%)	7 (70%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
b. CF for exclusiveness/clarification			
Q7			
Preposing	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	6 (60%)
It-clefts	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Q9			
Preposing	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	0 (0%)
Canonical word orders	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	5 (50%)
It-clefts	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	5 (50%)
Q11			
Preposing	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	4 (20%)	5(25%)	4 (40%)
It-clefts	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	2 (20%)
Wh-clefts	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (5%)	1(5%)	0 (0%)
Q15			
Preposing	15 (75%)	14 (70%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	7 (70%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	2(10%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Q16			
Preposing	13 (65%)	14 (70%)	3 (30%)

Canonical word orders	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	7 (70%)
It-clefts	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)

The indicator differed significantly post-teaching in the experimental groups, showing that instruction gave students a basic idea of the language's structures (see Table 5.6). The majority of the L2 learners in both stages who had neither explicit knowledge of certain syntactic patterns of IS nor the knowledge of how to use them used many syntactic constructions after teaching such as topicalisation and it-clefts. This finding suggests that teaching plays a major role in raising students' awareness of pragmalinguistic structures since, similar to NSs, L2 learners used many syntactic constructions post-teaching. However, L2 learners used non-canonical word orders to a significantly higher degree than before, and their responses highly exceeded NSs' responses (see Table 5.6 and Figure 5.6). This result is similar to Palacios's and Martínez's (2006) findings (see 3.2.2) when they examined Spanish ESL learners' use of Focus devices. Their results showed that Focus devices are highly overused due to two interacting causes: these syntactic structures are presented through formal instructions in a classroom setting, and their communicative functions are similar in both languages (Spanish and English), thereby enabling positive transfer.

Table 5.6: Cumulative performance pre- and post-teaching.

The pragmalinguistic test	S1 learners		S2 learners		NSs
	Pre-teaching	Post-teaching	Pre-teaching	Post-teaching	
The use of non-canonical word orders	1%	68%	1%	68%	42%
The use of canonical word orders	99%	32%	99%	32%	58%

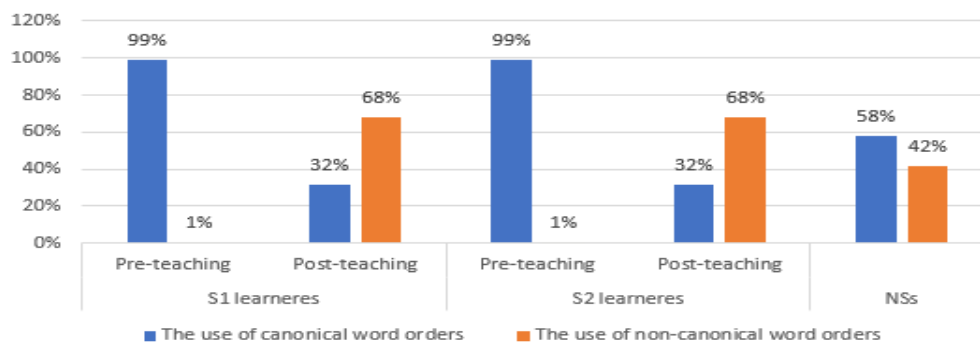


Figure 5.6: Cumulative performance pre- and post-teaching.

Similar to NSs, S1 and S2 L2 learners' use of it-clefts was most apparent in correcting scenarios (see Table 5.7 and Figure 5.7), whereas preposing was most apparent in emphasising scenarios (see Table 5.8 and Figure 5.8). The same was true for the use of rwh-clefts, which was used more in emphasising scenarios. The wh-clefts were rarely used in any of the scenarios. Typical examples of the learners' responses are given in (5.3).

Table 5.7: The use of CF devices for correction post-teaching.

CF devices	S1 (20 students)	S2 (20 students)	10 NSs
Preposing	32%	27%	17%
It-clefts	48%	52%	43%
Wh-clefts	0%	0%	0%
Rwh-clefts	5%	5%	0%

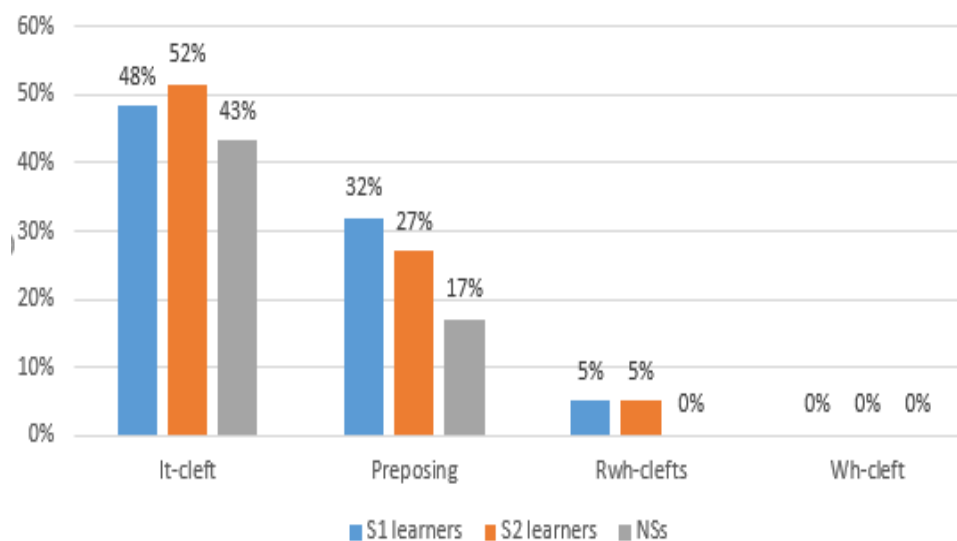


Figure 5.7: The use of CF devices for correction post-teaching.

Table 5.8: The use of CF devices for clarification post-teaching.

CF devices	S1 (20 students)	S2 (20 students)	10 NSs
Preposing	51%	50%	28%
It-clefts	11%	14%	4%
Wh-clefts	2%	2%	0%
Rwh-clefts	15%	14%	10%

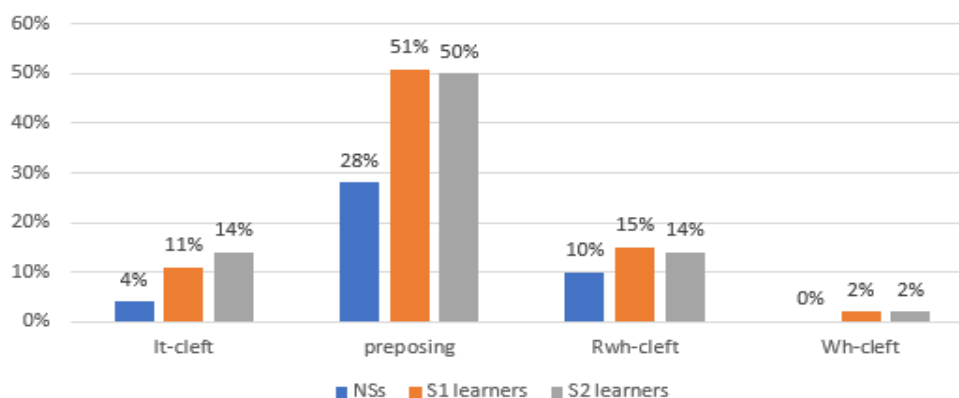


Figure 5.8: The use of CF devices for clarification post-teaching.

(5.3)

Situation 7: A scarf I was looking for. Preposing

Situation 16: A burger I ordered please. Preposing

Situation 6: It was Wonder not Peter Rabbit that I watched yesterday. It-clefts

Situation 6: No, it was Wonder that I watched yesterday, not Peter Rabbit. It-clefts

Situation 13: It is the Maths teacher not the Science teacher, that I respect.

It-clefts

Situation 9: Sara was the one who made the cake by herself. Rwh-clefts

Nevertheless, L2 learners overused⁹⁵ most of the syntactic devices used to achieve IS. For example, they often overused preposed structures although these structures are not frequently

⁹⁵ The native speakers' use of the syntactic devices is the baseline of the comparison between native English speakers and non-native speakers. Hence, if the percentage of L2 learners' use of the syntactic structures exceeds

used by NSs; however, this is not surprising in view of the contextually and formally highly restricted feature of this device in English. As referenced earlier (see 2.4.3), English exhibits fairly fixed SVO word order and has a very limited inflectional system; these factors place heavy constraints on word order permutations. Conversely, Arabic speakers prefer to use word order permutations because of Arabic's rich inflectional system. Consequently, L2 learners overused preposing in the target language due to the influence of the first language.

Furthermore, according to the functional-typological approach in SLA, particularly the Markedness⁹⁶ Differential Hypotheses discussed earlier (see 3.3.2), less marked structures are expected to be acquired easily and more marked structures are expected to be acquired with difficulty. Preposing⁹⁷ is a more marked structure in English because 'a postverbal phrase (the preposed) constituent appears in preverbal position' (Birner and Ward, 1998, p. 31), so its distribution in a sentence is extremely restricted. Consequently, preposing requires mental effort and more attention from the L2 learner. The vital barrier here for L2 learners is that while a particular word order pattern may be considered less marked in one language, it may be pragmatically more marked in another language. These findings suggest that although preposing is more marked in the target language, L2 learners used it excessively because it is less marked in their L1.

To put it differently, pre-teaching, L2 learners in both stages preferred to use safe word orders due to lack of awareness about the similarities and differences in the two languages structures.

that of NSs by more than 60%, this means that the learners overuse these structures since the word "overuse" means to use (something) excessively or too frequently (see the word "overuse" in Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

⁹⁶Markedness is syntactic patterns that diverge from canonical word orders and have additional pragmatic meaning in discourse, for instance, expressing contrast. Givón (1991, 1995) identifies markedness as a concept composed of the following criteria: cognitive complexity, frequency distribution and structural complexity. According to this definition, marked constituents require mental effort, more attention and increased processing time. Dryer (1995) argues that 'any attempt to define "pragmatic markedness" in universal pragmatic notions cannot succeed' (Dryer, 1995, p. 127). For more details about the notion of markedness in SLA, see 3.3.2, Givón (1991, 1995) and Dryer (1995).

⁹⁷See preposing in English in 2.3.1.4.1.

However, post-teaching there were many changes in their responses. First, they used preposing excessively (e.g., see Table 5, question 15). In this case, the excessive use of preposing in Arabic⁹⁸ leads to the excessive use of preposing in the target language. This language transfer (see 3.3.2) causes overproduction although preposing is more marked in English and has many constraints. This finding echoes Boström Aronsson's (2003) and Schachter's and Rutherford's (1979) findings that pragmatic devices which are frequently used in the first language are simply transferred to and overused in the target language. L2 learners in both stages became more aware about preposing post-teaching; however, to be fully aware of the constraints of preposing, they need to spend more time participating in classroom activities that focus on explicit and implicit techniques in learning these rules (see 3.5). These results are also similar to Sleeman's (2004) finding (see 3.1.1) that although L2 learners face challenges in learning the marked structures of the target language, positive transfer happens when these structures are a mandatory part of learning in the classroom setting. Second, L2 learners in both stages also used clefted structures, particularly it-clefts and rwh-clefts, more than NSs although these structures are rarely used in Arabic (see 2.4.2.1.2). Nevertheless, this overproduction can be explained by two important factors: 1) in accordance with the markedness hypothesis, clefted structures show a relatively low degree of structural markedness in relation to other syntactic constructions because the SVC/SVO word order is retained; and 2) the overproduction of these structures is due to a typological parameter, subject-prominence (SVO/SVC word order), not the influence of the L1. Consequently, these observations suggest that the teaching encouraged L2 learners to use clefts in their sentences. Also, L2 learners in both stages slightly overused but because of typological universals and the markedness hypothesis, particularly the less marked structure. This supports Sleeman's (2004) results that showed how positive transfer

⁹⁸For more details on IS in Arabic, see 2.4.2.

occurs to L2 structures that are part of obligatory instruction in ESL classrooms, even if these structures are similar to the L1 structures and are rarely used in the informal L1 (see 3.1.1).

Interestingly, while the overproduction of some Focus devices occurred due to language transfer or the typological universals, L2 learners—similar to NSs—preferred to use the initial position to present contrast in those responses, which is also due to the typological universals. For instance, students preferred to use preposing, *it*-clefts and *rwh*-clefts than *wh*-clefts, since *wh*-clefts serve to highlight important information at the end of the clause.

Consequently, the avoidance of the *wh*-cleft structure post-teaching is due to the typological universal that all languages appear to allow the initial position for contrast or emphatic constituents (Siewierska, 1994; see 2.3.1.4). It is clear that the instruction raised L2 learners' awareness so that their responses became more similar to NSs in terms of emphasising the initial position of a sentence to mark contrast.

Furthermore, both the NSs and L2 learners used a fair amount of topicalisation for clarification and correction (see Table 5.9). This finding suggests that teaching has a positive impact on encouraging students to use topicalisation. However, the learners slightly overused this structure compared to NSs due to the two important factors: 1) the topicalised constituent is used as the sentence theme or topic for contrast (see 2.3.3) in both languages; and 2) although Topic in Arabic has some constraints, it is used frequently in Arabic because Arabic is a topic-oriented language (see 2.4.2). Therefore, L2 learners used topicalisation more than the NSs due to the influence of the L1 and the similarities in the communicative functions of topicalisation in both Arabic and English. As mentioned earlier, Palacios-Martínez and Martínez-Insua (2006) argue that L2 learners overuse syntactic constructions that have similar communicative functions across both languages (the L1 and the L2) and are thereby enabled

by positive transfer. Typical examples of learners' responses using topicalisation post-teaching are given in (5.4).

Table 5.9: The use of Topics post-teaching.

Topics	S1 (20 students)	S2 (20 students)	10 NSs
Topicalisation for correction	38%	40%	35%
Topicalisation for clarification	43%	45%	35%

(5.4)

Situation 4: ...the chicken Sara said it was tasty.

Topicalisation

Situation 8: ...books about animals I enjoy a lot.

Topicalisation

Interestingly, the learners' responses were similar to each other both pre-teaching and post-teaching. Pre-teaching, both S1 and S2 learners used canonical word orders (99%); post-teaching both groups attempted to use non-canonical word orders. They used non-canonical English word orders that were quite similar to each other. Preposing was mainly used for clarification (51% of S1; 50% of S2) while it-clefts were predominantly used for correction (48% of S1; 52% of S2). They also used *rwh*-clefts to emphasise the initial part of their responses (15% of S1; 14% of S2), but *wh*-clefts were rarely used for correcting or emphasising (see Tables 5.7 and 5.8). A closer look at learners' responses that included topicalisation

illustrates that learners in both stages used a fair amount of topicalisation (38% of S1; 40% of S2) for correction (43% of S1; 45% of S2) and for clarification in their responses after teaching (see Table 5.9). It seems justifiable to conclude that L2 learners' responses in both stages were similar both pre-and post-teaching. Pre-teaching, both stages preferred to use canonical word orders; post-teaching, their responses were similar to each other and to NSs' responses in terms of their use of different pragmalinguistic structures to convey pragmatic meanings. This indicates that teaching IS increased learners' awareness about the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language.

In addition, all L2 learners' responses pre- and post-teaching were similar to the NSs' responses (see Table 5.10) in relation to information focus, and all participants preferred to use canonical word orders to present both broad and narrow focus because, as stated earlier, the sequencing of discourse aspects are directed by universal principles of IS already present in both languages such as 'Given before New', broad focus and narrow focus. However, the syntactic devices for presenting these aspects are, to some degree, language-specific⁹⁹.

Table 5.10: The use of IF post-teaching.

IS categories	S1 (20 students)	S2 (20 students)	10 NSs
Information Focus (IF)			
Narrow Focus Q5			
Canonical word orders	20 (100%)	20 (100%)	10 (100%)
Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q13			
Canonical word orders	20 (100%)	20 (100%)	10 (100%)

⁹⁹See Bos, Hollebrandse and Sleeman (2004) for more details on language structures.

Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Broad Focus Q1			
Canonical word orders	20 (100%)	20 (100%)	10 (100%)
Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q10			
Canonical word orders	20 (100%)	20 (100%)	10 (100%)
Non- canonical word orders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Surprisingly, unlike pre-teaching, the learners frequently used pronouns to present Given information and effectively tried to shift Focus to the second part of a sentence in order to package information in accordance with the principles of IS post-teaching. It is clear that teaching raised L2 learners' awareness about principles and syntactic constructions used to achieve to IS.

While the majority of the pragmatic categories may be universal, the syntactic devices for presenting these categories are different, so by explicitly and implicitly practicing and learning specific form-function rules that are common in the target language, L2 learners are able to discover these rules and use them naturally. In essence, both groups of L2 learners used safe word orders excessively before teaching, but there was a radical change in their responses after teaching. For example, different types of cleft sentences were heavily used by both groups of learners including it-clefts, rwh-clefts and other sentences used in combination with other IS constructions, particularly topicalisation; as a result their responses become more similar and closer to the NSs' responses. Teaching raised L2 learners' awareness and encouraged them to use different pragmalinguistic structures; however, in comparison to NSs, L2 learners in both stages generally used those pragmalinguistic structures more than NSs after teaching. These findings have several important implications:

Pre-teaching, although the L2 learners are familiar with and use different pragmalinguistic structures in their L1, they avoided using these structures due to the interaction between the L1's influence and typological universals, specifically subject-prominence, i.e., safe subject-prominent SVO structures. Furthermore, lack of pragmalinguistic ESL curricula has led learners to acquire the L2's grammatical forms away from their functions. Consequently, L2 learners' written production in both stages were different from the NSs written production. This indicates that grammatical competence does not facilitate pragmalinguistic use, as evidenced by students' avoidance to use pragmalinguistic structures; even very advanced L2 learners preferred to use safe word orders.

Post-teaching, L2 learners' awareness of the pragmalinguistic structures was raised, and their knowledge of these structures improved; however, in comparison with NSs, L2 learners overused some syntactic structures due to the influence of the L1 or the low degree of difficulty of some structures in accordance with the markedness hypothesis. For example, preposing is a more marked structure; however, it was overused because it is frequently used in Arabic. L2 Learners also used clefted structures more than the NSs; although these structures are rarely used in Arabic, they are less-marked structures in English. Topicalisation was also somewhat overused because the topicalised constituent is used as the sentence theme or topic for contrast in both languages, the L1 and the L2. On the other hand, the L2 learners avoided using wh-cleft structure after teaching although it is a less-marked structure in English. However, the avoidance of wh-cleft structure is due to the typological universal that all languages appear to allow the initial position for contrastive or emphatic constituents. Consequently, these findings suggest that, similar to NSs, if L2 learners use pragmalinguistic syntactic means, they prefer the sentence-initial position, as indicated by their heavy use of preposing, it-clefts and rwh-

clefts. If they do not use certain syntactic means, they tend to place the important information at the end of discourse in line with the universal patterns of all languages.

To sum up, teaching has a positive impact on raising learners' awareness of how to package information using different syntactic constructions to achieve IS. Nevertheless, after teaching, L2 learners' use of different structures exceeded that of NSs.

The next section presents L2 learners' results from the pragmalinguistic tests conducted two months post-teaching.

5.1.3 L2 Learners' Knowledge Two Months Post-Teaching (Stability of Knowledge in L2)

Two months post-teaching, L2 learners in both stages (in the experimental groups) took the IS test for the third time to answer the fourth research question; will the teaching and acquisition of pragmalinguistic knowledge result in stable knowledge?

Three comparisons were made: 1) S1 learners' pragmalinguistic competence post-teaching with their competence two months post-teaching; 2) S2 learners' pragmalinguistic competence post-teaching with their competence two months post-teaching; and 3) S1 learners' competence with S2 learners' competence in their use of these pragmalinguistic structures. These comparisons present the use of canonical and non-canonical word order by S1 and S2 learners and focus particularly on IS categories and their various syntactic devices such as it-clefts, rwh-clefts, wh-clefts, preposing and topicalisation (see Table 5.11).

Table 5.11: The use of canonical and non-canonical word orders by native speakers and L2 learners post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

	40 ESL learners' results post-teaching		40 ESL learners' results two months post-teaching		The previous results of the 10 NSs
	Stage1 (20 learners)	Stage2 (20 learners)	Stage1 (20 learners)	Stage2 (20 learners)	
Topics					
a. Topics for clarification					
Q4					
Topicalisation	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	12 (60%)	11 (55%)	10 (50%)	11 (45%)	6 (60%)
Q12					
Topicalisation	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	7 (35%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	11 (55%)	11 (55%)	11 (55%)	13 (65%)	7(70%)
b. Topics for clarification					
Q3					
Topicalisation	7 (35%)	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	8 (40%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	13 (65%)	12 (60%)	11(55%)	12(60%)	7 (70%)
Q8					
Topicalisation	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	9 (45%)	8(40%)	4(40%)
Canonical word orders	12 (60%)	12 (60%)	11(55%)	12 (60%)	6(60%)
Contrastive Focus					
a. CF for correction					
Q2					
Preposing	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	5 (25%)	1 (10%)
Canonical word orders	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	9 (90%)
It-clefts	7 (35%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	8 (40%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q6					
Preposing	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	1 (10%)
Canonical word orders	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	3 (30%)
It-clefts	11 (55%)	11 (55%)	14 (70%)	15 (75%)	6 (60%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q14					
Preposing	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	4(20%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)

It-clefts	11(55%)	12 (60%)	13 (65%)	14 (70%)	7 (70%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
b. CF for exclusiveness/clarification					
Q7					
Preposing	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	6 (60%)
It-clefts	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Q9					
Preposing	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Canonical word orders	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	5 (50%)
It-clefts	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	2 (10)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	14 (70%)	12 (60%)	5 (50%)
Q11					
Preposing	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	4 (20%)	5(25%)	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	4 (40%)
It-clefts	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	10 (50%)	7 (35%)	2 (20%)
Wh-clefts	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Q15					
Preposing	15 (75%)	14 (70%)	13 (65%)	12 (60%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	7 (70%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q16					
Preposing	13 (65%)	14 (70%)	10 (50%)	11 (55%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	7 (70%)
It-clefts	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)

Similar to NSs, L2 learners used it-clefts the most in correcting scenarios in both post-teaching and two months later (see Table 5.12). In addition, there was a slight increase in S1 learners'

use of it-clefts for correction two months after the teaching compared to their use post-teaching (48% post-teaching vs. 52% two months post-teaching), but there was an even higher increase in S2 learners' use of it-clefts two months post-teaching compared to their use post-teaching (52% post-teaching vs. 62% two months post-teaching; see Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: The use of CF for correction post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

CF devices	Post-teaching		Two months post-teaching		NSs
	S1 (20 learners)	S2 (20 learners)	S1 (20 learners)	S2 (20 learners)	
Preposing	32%	27%	20%	20%	17%
It-clefts	48%	52%	52%	62%	43%
Wh-clefts	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%
Rwh-clefts	5%	5%	0%	0%	0%

Furthermore, a closer look at the responses that included rwh-clefts reveals that both S1 and S2 learners used rwh-clefts for clarification more than before, but they still hardly used wh-clefts post-teaching as well as two months post-teaching (see Table 5.13). This finding confirms the previous finding L2 learners prefer to use the initial position in a sentence to present contrast.

The continuous use of it-clefts and rwh-clefts two months post-teaching suggests that the knowledge that the students acquired remains stable in their minds. Interestingly, the increase in the use of it-clefts and rwh-clefts two months post-teaching suggests that the L2 learners feel more confident using these structures; in relation to the other syntactic devices, clefts show a relatively low degree of structural markedness (see 3.3.2 and 5.1.2).

Table 5.13: The use of CF for clarification post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

CF devices	Post-teaching		After two months post-teaching		NSs
	S1 (20 learners)	S2 (20 learners)	S1 (20 learners)	S2 (20 learners)	
Preposing	52%	53%	38%	39%	28%
It-clefts	11%	14%	18%	13%	4%
Wh-clefts	2%	2%	2%	6%	0%
Rwh-clefts	15%	14%	17%	18%	10%

Surprisingly, most L2 learners' preposing sentences for clarification and correction that occurred post-teaching were not used two months post-teaching in both stages. S1 learners used preposing post-teaching at rate of approximately 52% for clarification and 32% for correction. Two months post-teaching, these percentages decreased to 38% for clarification and 20% for correction. The same occurred for S2 learners, as they used preposing post-teaching at a rate of approximately 53% for clarification and 27% for correction; two months later, these percentages dropped to 39% for clarification and 20% for correcting (see Tables 5.12 and 5.13). L2 learners' average use of preposing two months post-teaching became closer to NSs' average use of preposing (see Figure 5.9). These findings suggest that within two months, L2 learners became more aware of the constrained rules of preposing. During the semester and after finishing the pragmalinguistic structures instruction, L2 learners in both stages began to self-identify preposing rules in different literary texts even though the teacher did not ask them to do so.

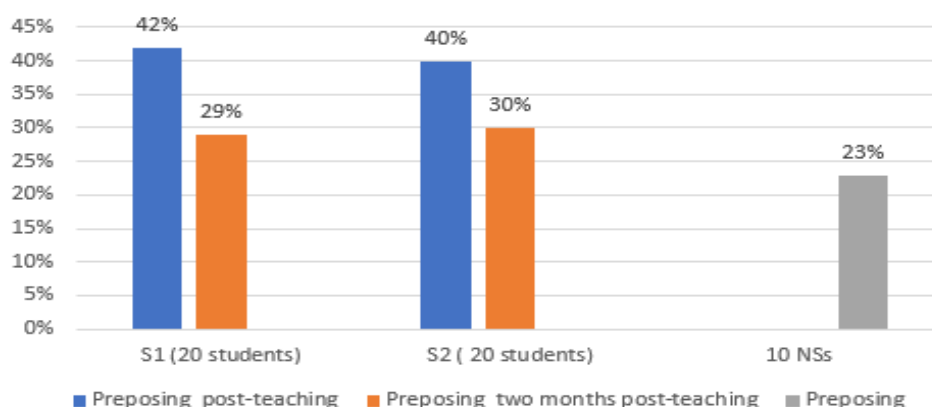


Figure 5.9: The use of preposing post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

Both S1 and S2 learners successfully used a fair amount of topicalisation for clarification and correction post-teaching as well as two months later (see Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: The use of Topics post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

	Post-teaching		Two months post-teaching		NSs
Topics	S1 (20 learners)	S2 (20 learners)	S1 (20 learners)	S2 (20 learners)	
The use of topicalisation for clarification	43%	45%	48%	40%	35%
The use of topicalisation for correction	38%	40%	45%	40%	35%

A closer look at S2 learners shows that they used topicalisation two months post-teaching relatively less frequently than before for clarification (45% vs. 40%) and alike for correction (40% vs. 40%). Unlike S2 learners, two months after the teaching, S1 learners used topicalisation relatively higher at a relatively higher rate (43% post teaching vs. 48% two months later) for both clarification (38% post-teaching vs. 45% two months later) and

correction (See Table 5.14 above). However, compared with NSs, L2 learners in both stages slightly overused topicalisation both post-teaching and two months post-teaching due to the similarity of topicalised structures in both languages (see 5.1.2).

For information focus, L2 learners two months post-teaching used canonical word orders productively to present both broad and narrow focus. Also, similar NSs, they frequently used pronouns to present Given information and effectively continued to shift Focus to the second part of a sentence to package information in accordance with IS principles.

Interestingly, L2 learners' responses in both stages were close to each other post-teaching and also two months post-teaching (see Table 5.15 and Figure 5.10), which means they became aware of the linguistic devices of the target language. These findings suggest that teaching is a useful tool for building pragmalinguistic knowledge and helping L2 learners keep this knowledge stable in their mind. Particularly, unlike what happens with or in L1 learning where children pick up whatever properties the input has and naturally use language structures according to their pragmatic functions, in ESL contexts learning does not always lead to stable knowledge. While teaching and instruction will, no doubt in most cases, have a positive impact on interlanguage leading to stable knowledge (of the sort observed in L1 learning), this is not always the case especially when L2 structures are taught in the ESL classroom separated from their functions (Trillo, 2002). Some studies, such as Abugharsa (2014), show that there are areas in which teaching does not lead to stable knowledge. L2 learners may forget what they have learned and go back to the point they were before. Bearing this in mind, for this study a

variety of teaching methods were used to help students retain the IS knowledge they had learned in class. They were taught implicitly using authentic materials, such as literary texts and descriptions of real-life situations, and were encouraged to communicate with each other in order to foster a natural atmosphere in the ESL classroom that would help them to use the language forms according to their pragmatic functions. Explicit methods were also used—students were given detailed explanations of IS with many examples, and comparisons between Arabic IS and English IS were made (see Appendix J). This represents a move away from traditional teaching methods that focus on forms divorced from their functions towards methods that focus on context and which lead to comprehensible input and language competence (Ewa, P. & Liliana, P., 2012; see 3.5 of this study). Macis (2011) mentions that L2 learners can achieve the stability of knowledge once the second language becomes sufficiently comprehensible.

Table 5.15: L2 learners' performance post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

The pragmalinguistic test	S1 learners		S2 learners		NSs
	Post-teaching	Two months post-teaching	Post-teaching	Two months post-teaching	
The use of canonical word orders	32%	33%	32%	35%	58%
The use of non-canonical word orders	68%	67%	68%	65%	42%

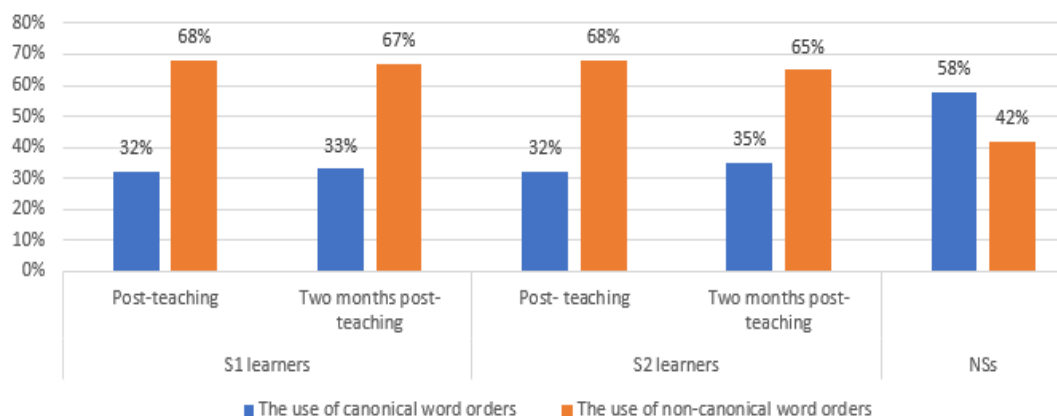


Figure 5.10: L2 learners' performance post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

To sum up, the discourse completion task analysis shows several findings:

1) In pre-teaching, S1 and S2 learners mainly used canonical word orders due to the lack of awareness of pragmalinguistic structures. The avoidance of different syntactic devices is due to two important factors: typological universals and acquiring the L2 grammatical forms away from their functions. Grammatical competence does not facilitate pragmalinguistic use, so the L2 learners' responses in both stages were different from the NSs responses.

2) In post-teaching, L2 learners' awareness of the target language IS increased and they began to use different syntactic structures (i.e., it-clefts, rwh-clefts, preposing and topicalisation) for correction and clarification. However, in contrast to the NSs, due to the influence of their L1 or differences in the markedness of these structure between the L1 and L2, they used these structures more than NSs and avoided using wh-clefts after teaching though it is a less-marked structure.

When L2 learners use syntactic means, they prefer the sentence-initial position; if they do not use certain syntactic means, they tend to place important information in the end position following the universal pattern of all languages.

3) Two months post-teaching, the L2 learners in both stages continued to use non-canonical word orders, indicating that the that the acquired knowledge remained stable in students' minds. However, they still used most of the IS devices more than NSs, so the need for more explicit and implicit training and practice in these structures in ESL classrooms is evident to make their written productions closer to those of NSs.

5.2 The Judgment Task (JT)

The second part of the quantitative phase is the judgment task, which ensures the validity of the L2 learners' results from the previous task, assesses students' understanding of language structures and shows different preferences for the use of syntactic used to achieve IS between both native and non-native speakers (see Table 5.16). The pragmalinguistic judgment task contains eight items (see Appendix H, Section B) utilising the same situations that appeared in the discourse completion task (see Appendix H, Section A). Each item has three given answers involving different syntactic devices, and participants were asked to rank the answers on a scale from 1–3 (1=lowest preference, 3=highest preference)¹⁰⁰.

In analysing the judgment task data, the preferred choice (ranking=3) was considered and the others (ranking<3) were discarded, and the average for these preferred options was calculated

¹⁰⁰For more details on the pragmalinguistic judgment task, see 4.5.1.3.

and analysed. Furthermore, the data from the judgment task were analysed in three phases: pre-teaching, post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

Pre-teaching, the quantitative analysis showed the use of syntactic devices by NSs and both stages of L2 learners. Similar to the discourse completion task findings, Table 5.16 and Figure 5.11 show that only few L2 learners in both stages chose non-canonical word orders in the completion tasks (S2 = 4%; S1 = 7%). For example, even though a canonical word orders choice was not given in Q1 (see, appendix H, Section B), most students wrote their own sentences in canonical word order patterns in the suggestion area. This finding supports the previous finding in the discourse completion task that L2 learners utilise significantly more basic word orders. On the other hand, NSs' responses in the discourse completion task and in the judgement task show that many NSs chose non-canonical word orders in both tasks (about 42% in the DCT and 44% in the JT; see Figure 5.11). It could be said, then, that the use of non-canonical word orders was common for NSs in both tasks, while the use of canonical word orders tended to be more common for L2 learners in both tasks, before they had received teaching, due to their lack of awareness of the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language.

Table 5.16¹⁰¹: The use of canonical and non-canonical word orders by native speakers and L2 learners pre-teaching, post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

The Judgment Task							
IS (device used)	Pre-teaching		Post-teaching		Two months post-teaching		The 10 native speakers' responses
Q1 (CF for correction)	Stage1 40 learners (%)	Stage2 40 learners (%)	Stage1 20 learners (%)	Stage2 20 learners (%)	Stage1 20 learners (%)	Stage2 20 learners (%)	
Preposing	6 (15%)	3 (7.5%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	2 (20%)
It-clefts	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)	11 (55%)	13 (65%)	12 (60%)	14 (70%)	5 (50%)
Wh-clefts	1 (2.50%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	3 (5%)	3 (30%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Canonical word orders	30(75%)	35(87.50%)	3(15%)	1(5%)	2(10%)	2(10%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

¹⁰¹ In Table 5.16, the responses shaded in white are listed on the test and the responses shaded in blue are not listed as choices.

Q2 (CF for exclusiveness/clarification)							
It-clefts	2 (5%)	1 (2.5%)	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	38 (95%)	39 (97.5%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	6 (60%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	1 (10%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q3 (Topic for clarification)							
It-clefts	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	6 (30%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	0 (0%)
Topicalisation	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	11 (55%)	7 (35%)	4 (40%)
Canonical word orders	36 (90%)	38 (95%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	6 (30%)	6 (60%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q4 (CF for correction)							
Preposing	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	1 (10%)
Canonical word orders	38 (95%)	39 (97.5%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	6 (30%)	7 (70%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (45%)	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	2 (20%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q5 (CF for clarification)							
Preposing	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (2.5%)	2 (5%)	12 (60%)	10 (50%)	13 (65%)	10 (50%)	6 (60%)
Canonical word orders	38 (95%)	37 (92.5%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	4 (40%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)

Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q6 (Topic for correction)							
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	12 (60%)	10 (50%)	3 (30%)
Canonical word orders	0 (100%)	38 (95%)	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	7 (70%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	1 (2.5%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)
Preposing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q7 (CF for correction)							
Preposing	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	1 (10%)
It-clefts	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	10 (50%)	11 (55%)	12 (60%)	11 (55%)	1 (10%)
Canonical word orders	38 (95%)	40 (100%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	7 (35%)	8 (80%)

Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rwh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q8 (CF for exclusiveness/clarifi cation)							
Preposing	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	15 (75%)	14 (70%)	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	2 (20%)
Canonical word orders	38 (95%)	40 (100%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	7 (70%)
Rwh-clefts	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	1 (10%)
It-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Topicalisation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Wh-clefts	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

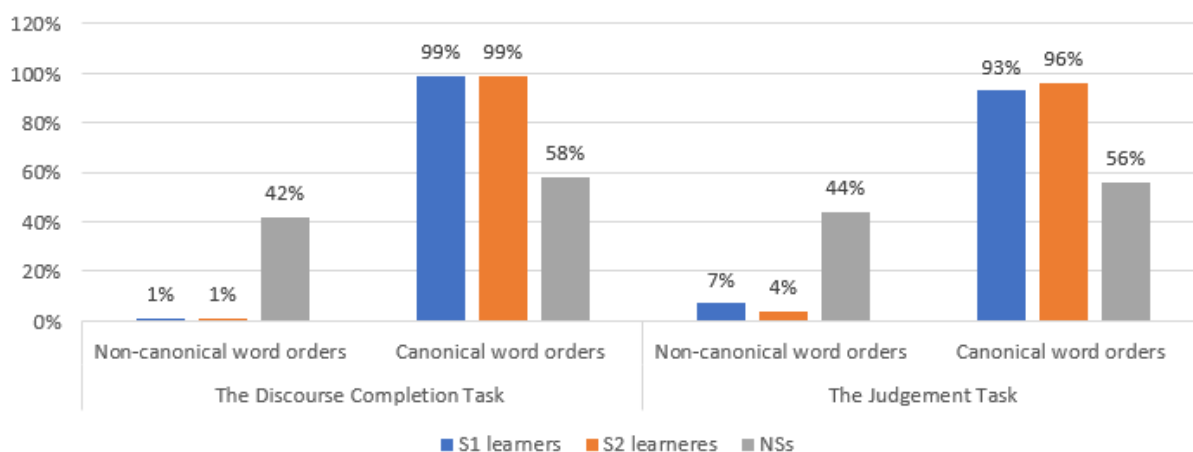


Figure 5.11: Cumulative pre-teaching performance.

Interestingly, although S2 learners are more advanced, their responses were relatively similar to S1 learners' responses in terms of the avoidance of non-canonical word orders (S2 = 4%; S1 = 7%). This finding also supports the previous finding that high performance in grammar does not guarantee native-level pragmalinguistic competence.

Post-teaching, the L2 learners in both stages, preferred to choose non-canonical word orders and their responses were also relatively similar to each other (see Figure 5.12). Both (S1 and S2) chose different syntactic structures such as preposing, *rwh*-clefts and *it*-clefts (see Table 5.16), indicating once again that teaching raises learners' awareness and knowledge of the target language's IS. Interestingly, L2 learners' use of different syntactic structures also exceeded the NSs' use, which supports the discourse completion task findings (see Figure 5.13).

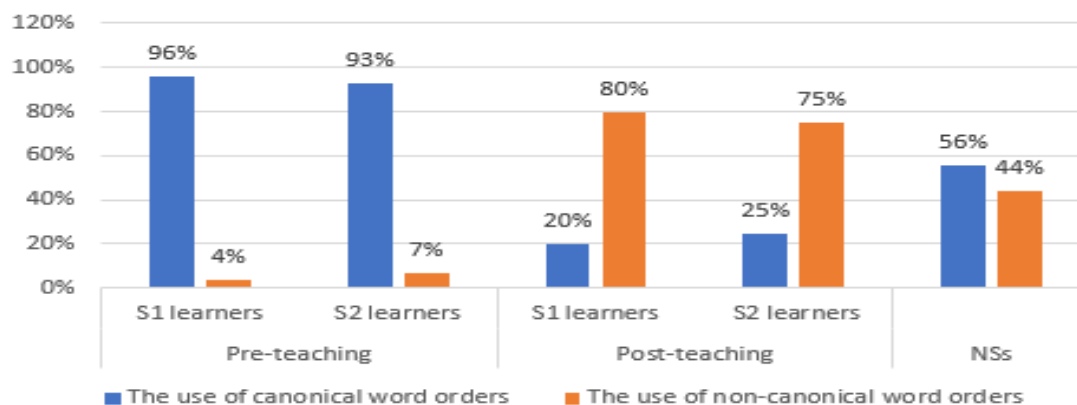


Figure 5.12: Cumulative pre- and post-teaching performance.

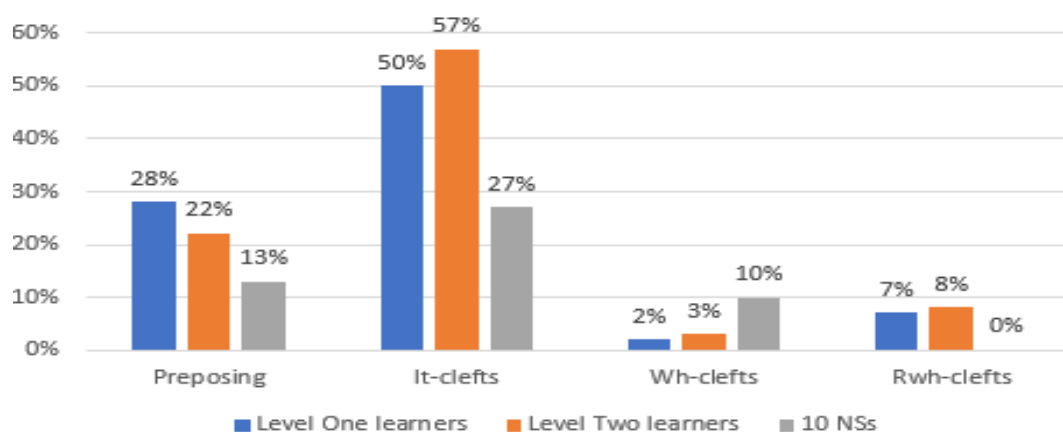


Figure 5.13: The use of CF devices for correction post-teaching.

Regarding the use of Focusing means, it-cleft was the most apparent choice for correction in L2 learners' responses in both stages (see Figure 5.13). Although it-cleft was not given among the choices for question 4 in the judgment task (see Appendix H, Section B), some of the students and the NSs wrote a sentence using this syntactic device in the suggestion area. L2 learners in both stages also highly overused it-cleft for correction (S1 = 50%; S2 = 57%)

compared to native speakers (NSs = 27%). This support the previous findings that it-cleft was overused because it is a less marked structure.

Moreover, NSs and both stages of L2 learners used rwh-clefts for clarification (NSs = 23%; S1/S2 = 22%) but rarely used wh-clefts (see Figure 5.14), supporting the idea that learners prefer to use the sentence-initial position to mark contrast across languages.

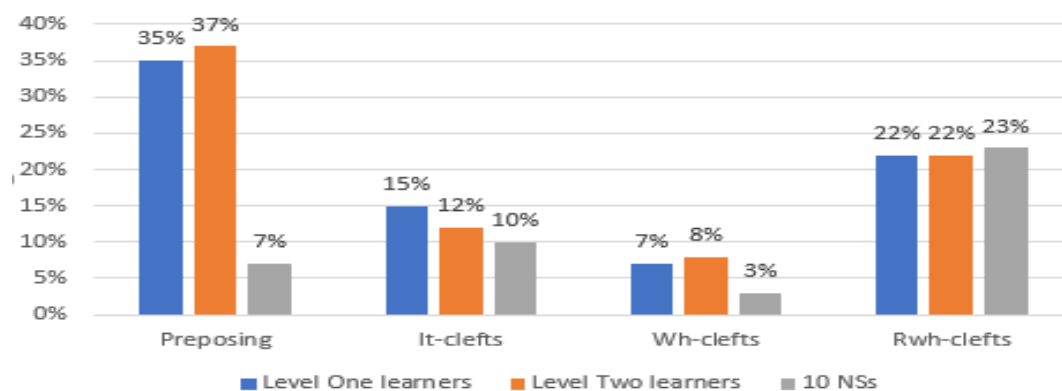


Figure 5.14: The use of CF devices for clarification post-teaching.

Interestingly, the NSs used preposing the most (28%) for clarification in the discourse completion task; however, in the judgment task, the NSs preferred to use rwh-clefts for clarification (23%) instead of preposing (7%; see Figure 5.15). Nevertheless, in both tasks, the findings showed that preposing is not frequently used by NSs due to its constraints.

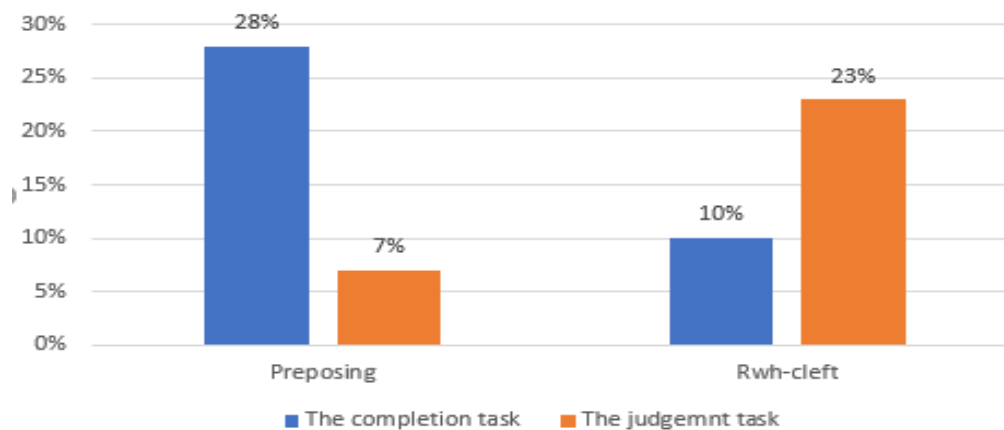


Figure 5.15: The use of preposing and rwh-clefts for clarification by native speakers.

On the other hand, unlike NSs, L2 learners in both stages overused preposing for clarification in the discourse completion task (S1 = 51%; S2 = 50%) as well as the judgment task (S1 = 35%; S2 = 37%; see Figure 5.16). These findings support the discourse completion task findings that preposing was overused by the learners due to the influence of Arabic, which depends heavily on word-order permutations.

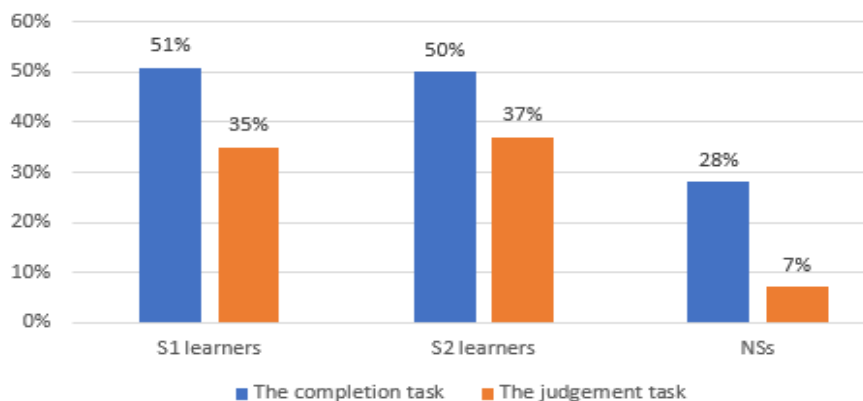


Figure 5.16: The use of preposing by the learners across different tasks post-teaching.

As to NSs' and L2 learners' use of Topic post-teaching, all groups used topicalisation a fair amount, so teaching raised the L2 learners' awareness of the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. However, similar to the former syntactic devices, L2 learners in both stages used topicalisation more than NSs for correction and clarification (see Figure 5.17) due to the similarity of topicalised structures in both languages. Finally, two months after IS instruction, the learners' responses in both stages were once again close to each other, and they continued to choose non-canonical word orders (see Figure 5.18).

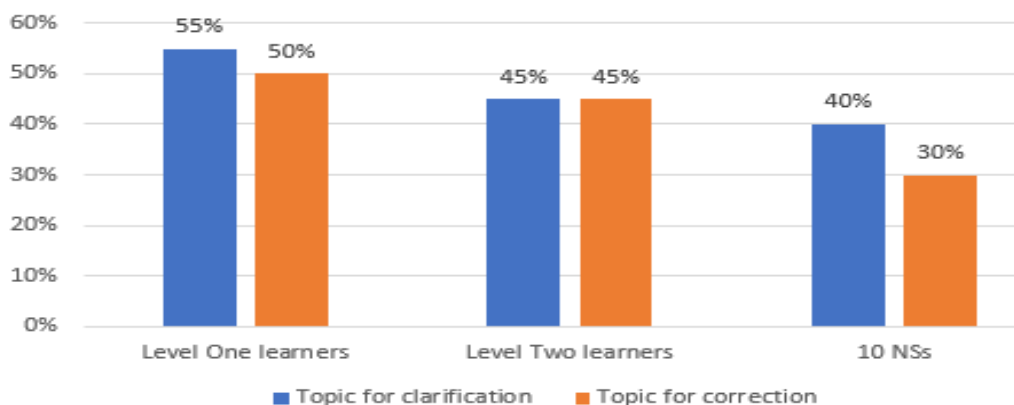


Figure 5.17: The use of topicalisation post-teaching.

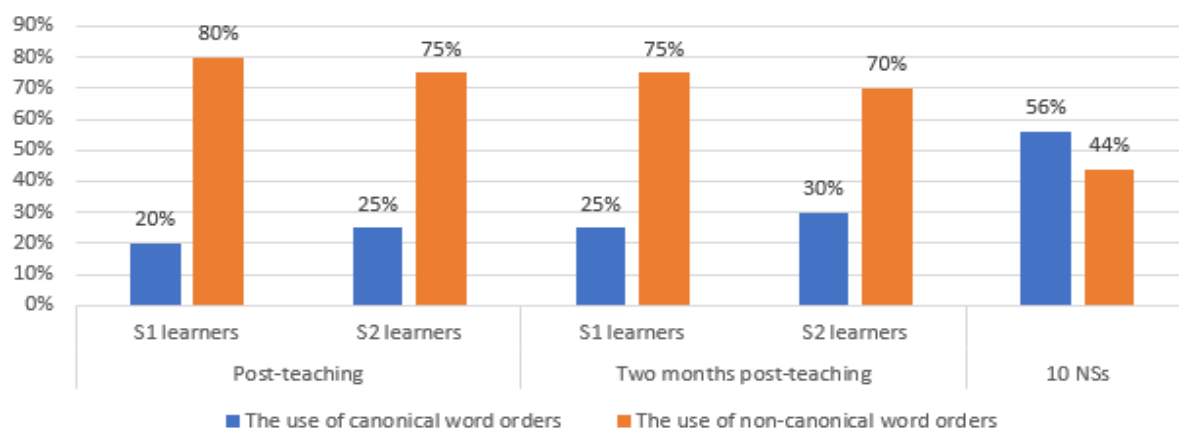


Figure 5.18: Cumulative two months post-teaching performance.

A closer look at learners' choices two months post-teaching shows that they continued to use different Focus devices for correction (see Table 5.17) and clarification (see Table 5.18). However, similar to the previous results, they overused some syntactic structures such as it-clefts for correction (see again Table 5.17) and preposing for clarification (see again Table 5.18) compared to NSs.

Table 5.17: The use of CF devices for correction post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

	Post-teaching		Two months post-teaching		10 NSs
CF for correction	S1 learners	S2 learners	S1 learners	S2 learners	
Preposing	28%	22%	20%	13%	13%
It-clefts	50%	57%	53%	55%	27%
Wh-clefts	2%	3%	3%	2%	10%
Rwh-clefts	7%	8%	7%	5%	0%

Table 5.18: The use of CF devices for clarification post-teaching and two months post-teaching

	Post-teaching		Two months post-teaching		
CF for clarification	S1 learners	S2 learners	S1 learners	S2 learners	10 NSs
Preposing	35%	37%	23%	27%	7%
It-clefts	15%	12%	15%	13%	10%
Wh-clefts	7%	8%	5%	8%	3%
Rwh-clefts	22%	22%	28%	23%	23%

Interestingly, although preposing for clarification was still overused by L2 learners in comparison to NSs even two months after IS instruction, there was a moderate reduction in their use of preposing for correcting and clarification compared to the post-teaching results, suggesting that the L2 learners realised the constraints of preposing over time (see Figure 5.19). This echoes the discourse completion task results once again (see 5.1.3 and Figure 5.9).

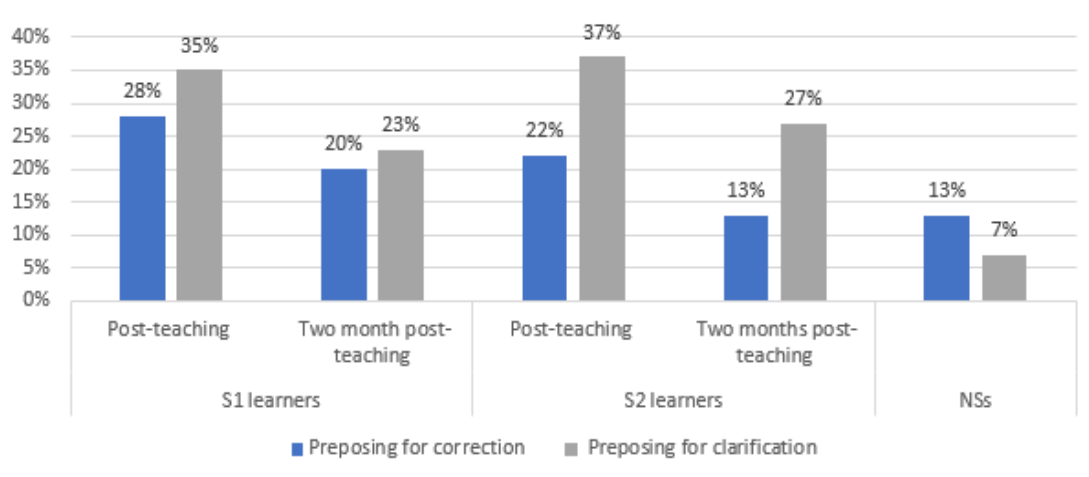


Figure 5.19: The use of preposing post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

Moreover, the L2 learners in both stages continued to choose topicalisation for clarification and correction (see Table 5.19 and Figure 5.20). Although learners in both stages used topicalisation more than NSs, there was also a slight decline in S2 learners' use of topicalisation for clarification over time (see Table 5.19).

Table 5.19: The use of topicalisation post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

Topic	Post-teaching		Two months post-teaching		10 NSs
	Stage One learners	Stage Two learners	Stage One learners	Stage Two learners	
Topicalisation for clarification	55%	45%	55%	35%	40%
Topicalisation for correction	50%	45%	60%	50%	30%

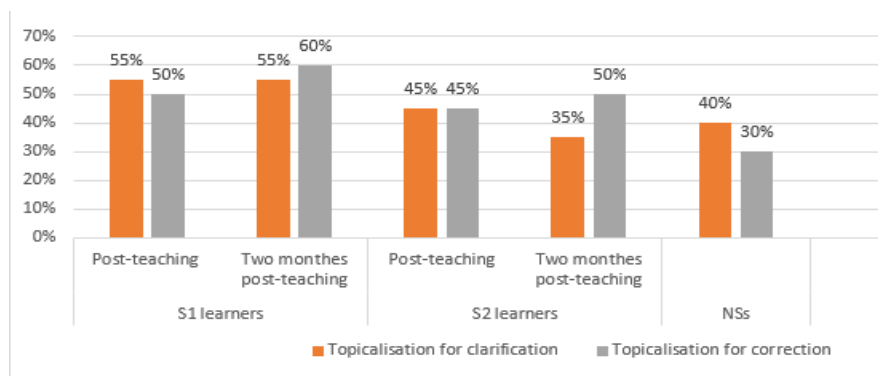


Figure 5.20: The use of topicalisation post-teaching and two months post-teaching.

It seems justifiable to conclude that L2 learners' continual use of syntactic devices to achieve IS two months post-teaching indicates that the knowledge that they acquired from teaching had been committed to long-term memory.

Generally, the findings in the judgment task support the results shown in the discourse completion task:

1. Pre-teaching, the L2 learners in both stages avoided non-canonical word orders and generally preferred to select canonical word orders due to a lack of awareness about the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. This shows that excellent grammatical ability does not guarantee native-like pragmalinguistic ability.
2. Post-teaching, the L2 learners in both stages started to use non-canonical word orders, and some of their choices were similar to those of NSs, suggesting that teaching facilitates the acquisition of pragmalinguistic knowledge and improves students' competence in pragmalinguistic structures
3. Two months post-teaching, the learners in both stages continued to select non-canonical word orders, which also supports the idea teaching IS contributes to stable knowledge.

5.3 The Qualitative Data

The aforementioned analyses were enriched through the inclusion of qualitative data (reflective journals and interview data) from six ESL teachers from different Taibah University branches in Saudi Arabia. As noted in 4.5.2, the ESL teachers were asked to write some of their views and thoughts on teaching the pragmalinguistic structures in their reflective teaching journals throughout the semester. The ESL teachers were also expected to document their in-class experiences, including successes and difficulties, any materials they used during teaching and any insights they had about their students. These reflective journals were used to help them

answer the interview questions. Moreover, the researcher kept a reflective journal during her teaching in order to answer the research questions most effectively. In this way, the quantitative findings are supported by quotes from the interviews and reflective journals that explain the role of teaching in the acquisition of the pragmalinguistic structures and the current status of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia from the ESL teachers' and researcher's perspectives. These quotes help the researcher explore the validity of the research as they give, according to Geertz (1973), a 'thick description' of the information.

Next, the teaching given to the experimental group will be discussed and excerpts from the researcher's reflective journals and teachers' interviews will be shared. After that, some suggestions for ESL teachers will be introduced based on the qualitative data analysis.

In the experimental group, L2 learners in S1 and S2 were consciously taught the pragmalinguistic structures through two methods: implicit and explicit (see Appendix J). First, they were taught IS implicitly¹⁰² using literary texts, and then they were taught IS explicitly through detailed explanations and examples (as mentioned in 4.5.5.2). They also participated in different activities that help them to notice the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language. Most of the activities used in this study, were based on a discourse-focused method (as discussed in 4.5.5.2), a pedagogical method that seeks to raise students' awareness on forms in a specific context (Blyth, 2000; Callies, 2008).

In one of the activities, L2 learners were asked to read some excerpts from literary texts such as John Donne's poem 'Aire and Angells' (see Appendix I, Part 1) and were asked to answer some questions related to the poem (i.e., 'How does the writer emphasise information

¹⁰² In the implicit method, the learners were taught through authentic materials (particularly through teaching the language forms along with their functions; also called the discourse method) and through interaction with others (the teacher as well as the learners) in the classroom activities.

throughout the poem?’; ‘What constructions does the writer use to highlight or draw attention to information particularly relate to the meaning of the poem?’). These questions aimed to investigate whether L2 learners were able to determine, notice and name the syntactic means the writer used to emphasise information in the poem. In this way, the implicit method of teaching, which consciously elicits IS from a meaningful context, is considered an effective means of exploring student’s knowledge of the syntactic and pragmatic characteristics of a target language (Ellis, 2004, p. 263). The fundamental aim of using literary texts in this study is to explore possibilities for effectively focusing L2 learners’ attention on specific constructions used to achieve IS. Another activity consisted of written texts based on real situations similar to the real situations in the discourse completion tasks used in the pragmalinguistic tests (see Appendix H, Section A; see 4.5.1.2). The L2 learners were asked to imagine these situations and answer questions related to these situations. The real situations and the related questions help learners produce different syntactic constructions to achieve IS (Blyth, 2000; Callis, 2008). The same activity was done but in another way. The L2 learners were given some real situations and they were asked to tell their friends about these situations and ask them questions in order to extract some syntactic devices.

Another exercise in this study consisted of a pragmatically odd written text (i.e., an odd letter)¹⁰³ taken from McCarthy (1991). The L2 learners were asked to read the letter and rewrite it to make it sound more normal/natural (for an example, see Appendix I, Form b). After they read the letter, they noticed odd sentences and the overuse of some structures. In addition, after analysis and discussion of the reasons for this pragmatic oddity, the L2 learners realised that the strangeness was clearly not caused by grammatical mistakes but by violations of pragmatic restrictions. As discussed in 4.5.5.2, these different tasks are all considered valuable means of

¹⁰³See Appendix I, Part 2.

exploring students' explicit competence in the pragmatic characteristics of a target language (Ellis, 2004, p. 264). More particularly, using literary texts literally forces learners to make sense of 'odd' syntax, potentially making a way for productive engagement with issues of information packaging through different word orders (Callies and Keller, 2008).

All these texts (teaching materials) were brought from sources outside the academic subjects which are taught in Saudi universities due to lack of IS in these subjects. Some comments from the researcher's reflective journals about the current status of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia are as follows:

'From the large amount of learning materials that was examined for this study, textbook neither explicitly take up the terms of information structure, emphasis and correction nor deal in-depth with several syntactic and lexico-grammatical means used to achieve IS'.

'The ESL curricula for Saudi learners exhibit a great deficit and do not contain even a single chapter that provides basic knowledge about IS such as the fundamental principles of IS packaging or the structures and functions of the most particular syntactic constructions'.

'No textbooks adopt a discourse focused technique to the teaching of syntactic constructions. For example, the investigation of one book series for Saudi learners of English 'Q: Skills for Success 1 Listening and Speaking' and 'Q: Skills for Success 1 Reading and Writing'—a series which is frequently used at Saudi universities—shows that there are still considerable curricula deficits. Although some topics in this book series begin introducing lexico-grammatical constructions such as the emphatic 'do'

and emphatic reflexives (yourself, herself), these structures are presented as grammar and their functional impact on IS in discourse is not addressed’.

The lack of IS in ESL curricula in all stages of learning at Saudi universities,—particularly the lack of interaction between English language subjects such as semantics and syntax that are taught alongside pragmatics at universities (see 3.1.1)—is a barrier to L2 learners successfully acquiring the target language.

Excerpts from teachers’ interviews and reflective journals were also selected to shed light on our discussion of how pragmalinguistic structures become one of the barriers L2 learners face when learning English as a second language.

Regarding the challenge faced in the learning and teaching of the English IS, most ESL teachers believed that IS instruction is totally ignored or does not even exist. One teacher explained as follows:

‘Although the teaching of English IS is important, it is totally ignored in ESL classrooms. In other words, students are provided with basic second language materials such as reading and writing which do not shed light on IS’.

Other ESL teachers offered similar explanations or remarked on difficulties in instruction:

‘Even though the literature materials, such as poems and novels, are considered authentic materials and may be full of the IS principles, the ESL teachers are required to cover and focus on different things, such as simile and metaphor’.

‘Actually, all language structures are taught as a grammar and not according to their functions in discourse . . .’.

‘The teaching of information structure is challenging because of the large number of exceptions and inconsistencies governing the system’.

Even with advanced learners of English, the scenario is the same. IS is not taught in their ESL curricula, so they still face problems acquiring some English skills, such as writing:

‘ . . . Students in all levels of learning English as a second language face challenges organising information in a sentence, so some of their sentences are hard to understand. . . In other words, they regularly produce some ill-formed or stylistically awkward sentences in their writings’.

Two interviewees pointed to the nonexistence of explicit and implicit methods in teaching pragmalinguistic structures:

‘The ESL teachers have no knowledge of information structures and have no idea how or why to teach them, so they cannot assist students in learning how to organise or package information in a sentence as native speakers . . . They may not even give corrective feedback on students’ errors regarding information structure’.

Another experienced ESL teacher expressed further concern:

‘Teaching the information structure of a target language takes extra effort and time from the teacher to prepare the materials . . . Authentic materials are very important for teaching the language structures . . . Many examples and explanations are also important’.

These challenges led us to the reasons behind L2 learners' use of canonical word orders in English, and the ESL teachers made various suggestions on how educators can help these learners comprehend pragmalinguistic structures:

'I think it would be great if we had certain criteria that could be used when we assessed learners' oral and especially written performances. Among these, it would be helpful to have items about information structure. Students could be informed in advance about these criteria to draw their attention to how to organise information in accordance with the IS principles'.

'I think pragmatic aspects of the target language should be combined with the teaching with all ESL subjects, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, writing, listening, speaking and reading'.

Other suggestions included the idea that pragmalinguistic structures should be taught both explicitly and implicitly, as demonstrated in this study, and that students should receive regular feedback from their teacher about their use of these language structures:

'You know, if students had the chance to notice the rules of information structure in context, use them and then receive feedback, especially in their writing, they would certainly be better off'.

' . . . these structures should be taught should be taught explicitly, implicitly and continuously during the semester . . . because I have noticed from my reflective journals that students from different levels of learning English after teaching started to be able to emphasise the most important elements in a sentence correctly and at the correct

time in their speech and writing. Many used pronouns to show Given information . . . several syntactic devices of information structure were also regularly used such as different types of clefts, mainly it-clefts, in order to emphasise information, and I had never noticed them using these structures in their speech or writing before teaching. Their sentences are becoming clearer and easier to understand . . . There is no point teaching students the language without its pragmatic functions’.

The data analysis of the reflective journals and interviews (see Table 5.20) confirms the discourse completion task and the judgment task findings that L2 Learners before teaching had difficulties to correctly organise information in a sentence with the syntactic devices used to achieve IS, so their sentences varied from those of native English speakers. Lack of pragmlinguistic structures in ESL curricula causes learners to avoid non-canonical word orders or avoid using a form according to its function in a specific context. Also, ESL teachers’ limited knowledge of these structures causes them to teach L2 forms away from their functions. Hence, L2 learners’ lack of awareness of pragmlinguistic structures create many problems such ill-formed or stylistically awkward sentences in writing or speaking production and, as Leube (2000) states, the avoidance of using the pragmlinguistic structures of the target language leads to unclear communication and texts with style problems. Similarly, Liu (2004) mentions any failure in L2 learners’ comprehension and production in any language use would result communication breakdown or pragmatic failure (see 3.1).

Furthermore, the data confirm that teaching using explicit and implicit methods plays a major role in raising students’ awareness of pragmlinguistic structures and leads to stable knowledge. For instance, many syntactic devices were frequently used in students’ written and

spoken production (as noted by one of the ESL teachers). Based on these findings, this study argues for both explicit and implicit methods of teaching IS, arguing that noticing is an important first step in the teaching and learning of IS (see Jessner, 2006, p. 34).

Table 5.20: Sample of thematic content analysis.

Thematic coding	Details	Effects
<p>The current status of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia</p> <p>What is the current situation regarding IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia?</p>	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>The ESL curricula for Saudi learners exhibit a great deficit and do not contain even a single chapter that provides basic knowledge about IS.</i> ➤ <i>No textbooks adopt a discourse-focused technique.</i> ➤ <i>These structures are presented as grammar and their functional impacts on information structure in discourse are not addressed.</i> 	<p>Students' in both stages lack awareness of pragmalinguistic structures.</p>
<p>Is there any correlation between pragmalinguistic competence and grammatical competence?</p> <p>Before teaching</p> <p>Are there any differences between L2 learners at early and advanced stages before and after they are taught IS?</p>	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Students in all levels of learning English as a second language face challenge organising information in a sentence, so some of their sentences are hard to be understandable.</i> ➤ <i>IS is totally ignored.</i> ➤ <i>The ESL materials do not shed light on IS.</i> ➤ <i>Teaching forms away from their functions.</i> ➤ <i>The ESL teachers have no knowledge about IS and have no idea how to teach them.</i> ➤ <i>Students in all levels of learning English regularly produce some ill-formed or stylistically awkward sentences in writing or speaking production.</i> 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students from different levels were able to emphasise the most important elements in</i> 	<p>Teaching raises S1 and S2 students'</p>

<p>After Teaching</p> <p>IS</p> <p>Are there any differences between L2 learners at early and advanced stages before and after they are taught IS?</p>	<p><i>a sentence correctly and at the correct time in their speech and writing.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Many used pronouns to show Given information were always used.</i> • <i>Several syntactic devices were also regularly used, such as topicalisation and clefts.</i> 	<p>awareness of IS and leads to stable knowledge.</p>
<p>The effectiveness of teaching</p> <p>What is the role of teaching in the acquisition of IS?</p> <p>Stability of Knowledge</p> <p>Will the teaching and acquisition of pragmalinguistic knowledge result in stable knowledge?</p> <p>The effectiveness of teaching</p>	<p>➤ <i>L2 learners need to know how to package information in accordance with the IS principles of the target language in order to be able to successfully engage in the target language.</i></p> <p>➤ <i>Pragmatic aspects of the target language should be combined with teaching pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, vocabulary, writing. listening, speaking and reading.</i></p> <p>➤ <i>There is no point of teaching students the language without its pragmatic functions.</i></p> <p>Some techniques of teaching IS:</p> <p>➤ Explicit methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Many examples and explanations are also important.</i> 2. <i>notice the rules of information structure.</i> 3. <i>students should receive regular feedback from the teacher about their use of these language structures</i> <p>➤ Implicit methods (discourse methods):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>If students had the chance to notice the rules of information structure.</i> 2. <i>if students had the chance to . . . use them, they would certainly be better off.</i> 3. <i>Authentic materials are very important for teaching the language structures.</i> 4. <i>Using literary texts, such as poems, stories and letters.</i> 	

	<p>5. <i>all language structures should be taught with their functions . . .</i></p> <p>6. <i>There is no point teaching students the language without its pragmatic functions.</i></p>	
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The qualitative data analysis offers several suggestions for how ESL teachers can help students acquire an L2 successfully. First, IS should not be neglected in ESL classes, and ESL teachers should have knowledge of IS and its important in SLA. Yates (2010) states pragmatic structures cannot be taught unless teachers consciously know how these structures are understood in different discourses of language use¹⁰⁴ (see 3.1).

ESL teachers should also use pedagogical teaching methods to raise L2 learners' awareness of how a language works. Explicit and implicit teaching methods can be used to focus learners' attention on the target language's pragmalinguistic structures which facilitate the acquisition of these structures and the stability of information. Explicit methods make L2 learners aware of syntactic patterns that cannot be easily learned implicitly (Dekeyser, 2003), but implicit methods help learners use language in a natural context. According to Trillo (2002), discourse pragmatics have their own features in each language and 'their development demands a natural context' (ibid., p. 770).

ESL teachers should bring authentic language materials to their classrooms and let their students notice and practice the syntactic means of the pragmalinguistic structures in different contexts so that they can utilise them successfully in their spoken or written discourse. The use of authentic language materials, such as a variety of literature, is more beneficial than the use

¹⁰⁴ESL teachers should be consciously aware of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic terms of communication to be able to explain the formal and functional features of the L2 in the classroom. For more details on pragmatics in SLA, see Trosborg (2010) and Yates (2010).

of non-authentic, graded and simplified materials; authentic materials allow L2 learners to experience how IS strategies are used within different sentence structures in natural language. Practice with these materials helps L2 learners notice and use English language structures in natural contexts.

When dealing with writing or grammar, L2 learners have to be taught how to emphasise new or unfamiliar information and deemphasise given or old information through various syntactic structures such as clefts, preposing and active and passive structures. When L2 learners learn how to formulate these syntactic means, they also need to learn their functional impact on contextual IS (i.e., the discourse method). As noted in 1.1, what make students' writings and conversations regularly sound unidiomatic (odd) or different from native speakers' sentences (both writing and speech) is their failure to use various syntactic constructions used to achieve IS. For example, students must learn that passive means are not only grammatical but also functional in emphasising the most important contextual element. Finegan and Besnier (1989) highlight novice writers' misunderstandings about passive means:

What makes a sentence like '*A good time was had by all*' humorous is the fact that it is passive without a reason. Such passive structures happen regularly among novice writers, who appear to labour under the miscomprehension that passive structures are more literary than active ones.' (ibid., p. 233)

In ESL classes, simply teaching vocabulary and grammar is insufficient for making students successful communicators in the target language. Pragmatic aspects of the target language should also be combined with instruction in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, writing, listening, speaking and reading. Therefore, we advocate an integrated teaching approach to heighten learners' awareness across the curriculum through a fruitful integration of literature and linguistics.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

This chapter elaborates on the main study findings and answers the five research questions.

6.1 Interpretation the Results of the Study

Both the literature review and the experimental study have demonstrated evidence that there are considerable differences between native speakers of English and ESL Saudi learners in their use of a number of the pragmalinguistic English structures, i.e., the syntactic constructions used to achieve IS. These differences will be demonstrated by three interacting factors: the influence of the L1 (Arabic), typological universals and lack of knowledge of the pragmalinguistic functions of the target language. The qualitative and quantitative data showed evidence that teaching develops L2 learners' pragmalinguistic competence and makes their written production closer to that of native English speakers. The data will be discussed in relation to each of the target research questions in this study.

According to the research Q1 (How do Arabic and English realise information structure (IS)? What are the similarities and differences in IS between both languages?), information structure exists in all human languages and refers to how to package information in discourse to convey different pragmatic needs, such as amending a communicative breakdown or attracting interlocutors' attention (Callies, 2009; Miller, 2006). IS is associated with three essential features: Focus, Given and Topic. Given is old information related to previous information in discourse. Focus is new information at the time of speech and is a non-recoverable or pragmatically unpredictable constituent in the context (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 207). Topic is another way IS can be used indicate what the clause is generally about, also known as the

concept of ‘aboutness’ (Féry, 2006). Cross-linguistically, the sequencing of discourse parts is directed by universal IS principles already present in Arabic and English such as ‘Given first’ and ‘Focus last.’ However, the way IS is encoded is language-specific and differs across languages (Foley, 1994, p. 1678).

Recent pragmatic research in interlanguage pragmatics has suggested that, in a target language setting, L2 learners do not need to acquire the universal basic pragmatic aspects of IS that are already present in both languages. What is lacking in their interlanguage, however, are the different syntactic constructions used to achieve IS. The use of these constructions can make L2 learners’ written production closer or more similar to native English speakers, which is discussed in detail in the answer of Q2 and Q3.

In reference to the second part of Q1, English and Arabic share some similar communicative IS functions. For example, the contrastive focus and contrastive topic in both languages carry different pragmatic meanings such as correcting or emphasising, and both appear to allow the use of initial position for contrast in a sentence. However, English and Arabic also display differences in their pragmalinguistic structures.

First, Arabic depends on word order inversions and syntactic constructions to mark different pragmatic meanings, but English only uses syntactic means such as preposing and different kinds of clefts to indicate these meanings (Khalil, 2000). Second, Arabic also has a rich inflectional system that allows for a large variety of word order inversions (i.e., OV, SOV and VOS). This mobility of sentence elements allows writers/speakers to play with language structures to achieve their intended pragmatic goals. Conversely, English has a very limited inflectional system, which places heavy constraints on word order inversions. For example, preposing has strict conditions because English exhibits fairly fixed SVO word order. Finally,

English native speakers prefer to use different kinds of clefts instead of preposing because clefts have less restrictions (Doherty, 1999). Arabic speakers, on the other hand, prefer to use word order permutations because of the Arabic's rich inflectional system. Consequently, L2 learners frequently produce ill-formed or stylistically awkward sentences in their written production due to the difference in the pragmalinguistic structures of the two languages, all of which can be traced back to the (in-)flexibility of the language's canonical word order patterns.

In reference to the research Q2 (How do Saudi ESL learners perform regarding their realisation of English IS compared to native English speakers? Is there any correlation between pragmalinguistic competence and grammatical competence?), the data from the discourse completion task show that L2 learners in both stages used significantly more basic word orders before teaching while the native speakers displayed higher frequency rates for the use of non-canonical patterns compared to the L2 learners. The native speakers specifically used different syntactic structures to package contextual information. For example, the data show that *it*-clefts were used more in correction scenarios while preposing and *rwh*-clefts were used more in clarification scenarios. Topicalisation, on the other hand, was commonly used for both correction and clarification. For IS principles such as using pronouns to refer to Given information, the data in the discourse completion task show that pronouns were frequently utilised by the native speakers to present Given information while most of the L2 learners in both stages used proper nouns to present the same information. Interestingly, L2 learners not only avoided using non-canonical word orders but also avoided using pronouns to present Given information in a sentence even though Arabic depends heavily on these types of word order permutations (as mentioned in the answer of the first research questions) and uses

pronouns to present Given information. This finding is consistent with Plag's (1994) study¹⁰⁵ who mentions that

‘learners tend to avoid some syntactic means typical of their first language when they introduce new referents to the discourse and utilise the ‘safe’ SVO pattern with a prototypical, agentive subject.’ (ibid, p. 42)

In relation to information focus, both groups (NSs and L2 learners) showed very similar frequency distributions for the use of canonical word orders to present broad and narrow focus. All the L2 learners' responses (S1 and S2) were almost like the NSs' responses, because the sequencing of discourse parts is directed by universal IS principles in both languages (as stated earlier). However, when it came to end-focus, NSs preferred to add a new phrase at the beginning of the sentence that allowed them to move the important/new information to the last part of a sentence; L2 learners did not make any changes or move any of the sentence constituents. Consequently, all data in the completion task show that L2 learners in both stages have very limited knowledge and awareness of the proper contextual functions and use of English IS (i.e., ‘Given first’ and ‘Focus last’). However, they are unaware of pragmalinguistic structures, such as specific syntactic constructions used to mark emphasis or contrast, and do not have the implicit knowledge to refer to such constructions. Similar findings were obtained from the judgment task, interviews and the reflective journals, as L2 learners preferred safe canonical word orders. These findings confirm that both stages of L2 learners have problems with the contextual use of syntactic constructions to achieve IS.

¹⁰⁵ For more details about Plag's (1994) study, see 3.2.1 of this study.

The second part of Q2 gives reasons about L2 learners' unawareness and their avoidance of using pragmalinguistic structures of the target language and this will be discussed in detail next.

To answer the second part of Q2, it was mentioned in the introduction of this study that the findings (from both the quantitative and the qualitative methods) of this research may also have implications for second language acquisition theories in regarding to

- a) the interrelationship of pragmalinguistic and grammatical abilities in the target language, English; and
- b) the influence of IS of the first language on the acquisition of the target language.

As for the first point, current programmatic research in interlanguage pragmatics have proposed that the development of grammatical knowledge has to be seen as independent of the development pragmatic knowledge, and that 'a high level of grammatical knowledge does not guarantee concomitant a high level of pragmatic knowledge' (Bardovi-Harling, 1999, p. 685). The results of this research support Kasper and Rose's (2002) second scenario that 'grammar precedes pragmatics' (ibid., p. 147) because students acquire the L2 grammatical forms before they acquire their pragmalinguistic functions. Particularly, the results of this study give evidence for one of the three shades¹⁰⁶ of the 'grammar precede pragmatics scenario: 1) grammatical competence does not facilitate pragmalinguistic use' (ibid, p.147), as is evidenced by the learners' (in both stages) non-use of the pragmalinguistic structure of the target language.

¹⁰⁶ For more details about the three shades of the 'grammar precede pragmatics' scenario, see 3.1 of this study.

Both S1 and S2 learners' responses before teaching were very similar in the non-use of non-canonical word orders on the pragmalinguistic test. Consequently, high performance in grammar does not guarantee native-level pragmalinguistic competence. While this is inconsistent with some research (see Thompson, 1978; Givón, 1984; Klein and Perdue, 1992)¹⁰⁷, it is supported by other studies (see Plag, 1994; Callies and Keller, 2008) that suggest that even advanced learners avoid using non-canonical word orders due to unexpected similarities between the first language and the target language. It is important to mention here that despite the fact that L2 learners are familiar with the mobility of sentence constituents in their first language, they avoid using non-canonical word orders (such as fronting the object or postponing the subject) or adding new constituents (such as using pronouns to refer to Given information) because they have acquired the L2 forms away from their functions. This blocks positive transfer of the similar structures and hinders the productive use of the language.

With regards to the second point, previous studies' results show that, due to the close interplay between typological universals and first language characteristics¹⁰⁸ such as IS principles and syntactic constructions for marking contrast or clarification, the learners' first language is likely to influence second language acquisition, i.e., by causing the avoidance or overproduction of specific syntactic structures. This assumption is supported by the findings of this research, with respect to both typological universals and crosslinguistic influence, the L2 learners in both stages entirely avoided using or choosing non canonical word orders before teaching. For example, while the mother language information structure appears to play a role in terms of the high acceptance of preposing, the interaction of subject-prominence explains L2 learners' avoidance of using this structure in written production of the target language. The findings

¹⁰⁷For more details about Thompson's (1978) and Givón's (1984) hypotheses, see 3.2.1.

¹⁰⁸For more details about the interplay between the typological universals and the L1, see Chapter 3.

suggest that the avoidance of using non canonical word orders of the target language is due to the typological universals, namely subject-prominence, which is a sentence must have an initial subject, i.e. safe subject -prominent (SVO) structures. Hence, the typological universals block positive transfer even when languages have similar pragmalinguistic structures.

These observations suggest that, unlike native English speakers, both stages of ESL Saudi learners prefer to use canonical English word orders because they acquired the L2 grammatical forms before or away from their pragmalinguistic functions and because of typological parameters, specifically subject-prominence. It seems that the subject-prominence is essential for productive output, as students tend to place the agent in a canonical position.

In sum, L2 learners' lack of awareness of the pragmalinguistic structures of a target language before IS instruction is largely the result of three factors: 1) the different structures between the two languages; 2) the interaction between typological universal and the influence of the L1; and 3) the acquisition of the L2's grammatical forms before or away from their pragmalinguistic functions (see Figure 6.1). These factors lead L2 learners to avoid using the discourse pragmatics of the target language, which causes ill-formed or stylistically awkward sentences that are noticeably different from those of the native speakers. Leube (2000) argues that the avoidance of using the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language leads to unclear communication and texts with "style" problems.

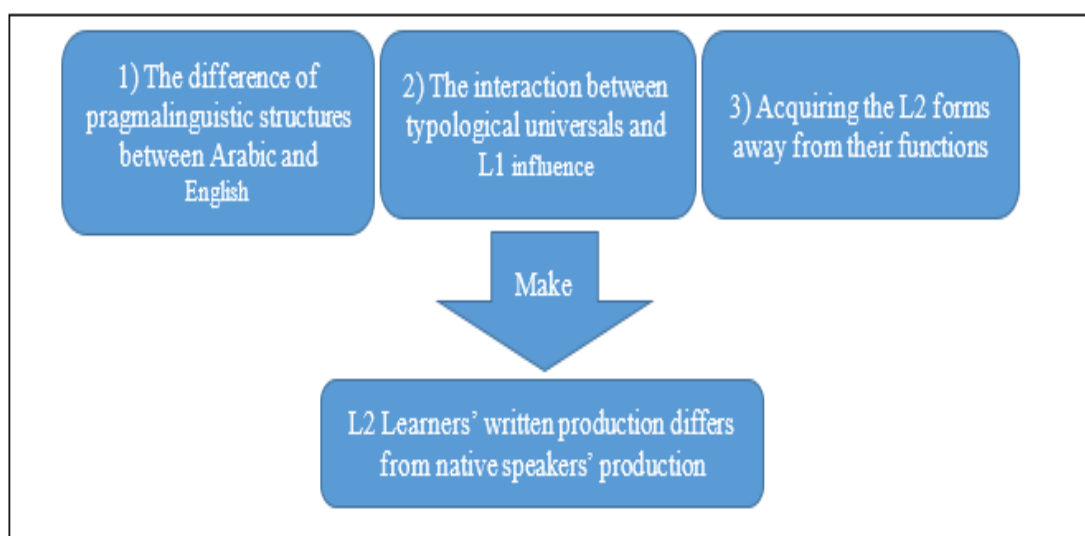


Figure 6.1: Factors affecting pragmalinguistic competence in the target language before IS instruction.

According to the research Q3 (What effect can the use of implicit and explicit instructions have on L2 learners' acquisition of IS? Are there any differences between the learners at early and advanced stages before and after they are taught IS?), the data show that native English speakers used significantly more non-canonical patterns than L2 learners and that the responses of both L2 groups (S1 and S2) were very similar before teaching in their non-use of non-canonical word orders on the pragmalinguistic test (as stated in the answer of Q2). This supports the idea that high grammatical ability does not make L2 learners' performance similar/closer to the native speakers in relation to information packaging. However, after teaching the pragmalinguistic structures of English, this changed significantly.

There was a radical change in S1 and S2 learners' responses after teaching using explicit and implicit methods. Similar to the native speakers, L2 learners in both stages used many syntactic constructions to achieve IS, and the frequency of these syntactic devices was almost equal for both groups (S1 and S2) not only in the discourse completion task but also in the judgment task. These findings suggest that teaching plays an important role in raising students' awareness

of the pragmalinguistic structures and they echo the results of previous studies (Palacios, 2006; Martínez, 2006; Sleeman, 2004) that show positive transfer across L2 structures that are taught in ESL classrooms. However, the data clearly shows that most of these pragmalinguistic structures were actually overused by L2 learners compared to the native speakers. Similar findings were obtained from the judgment task, as L2 learners used preposing, it-clefts and topicalisation more frequently after teaching.

For it-clefts, the data from the discourse completion task and the judgment task clearly show that, similar to the native speakers, L2 learners used it-clefts more for correction than clarification. However, L2 learners' overuse of it-cleft sentences was due to their reliance on safe subject-prominent SVO/SVC structures. The markedness hypothesis provides further support for this interpretation, arguing that less-marked structures acquired more easily, so learners overuse these 'easier' structures. Unlike similar studies (Boström Aronsson, 2003) on the overuse of clefted structures in terms of positive transfer from the first language, the overrepresentation of these structures in Saudi learners' writing productions is not a result of first language transfer, since it-clefts are rarely used in Arabic compared to preposing.

These observations presume that it-clefts were easily acquired and overused by Saudi learners of English for two reasons: 1) the typological parameter of subject- prominence; and 2) the less-marked structure of it-clefts in English, since the SVC/SVO word order is retained (Callies, 2009).

When comparing different kinds of clefts together, the data show that L2 learners' preferred option in both stages, similar to the native speakers, were it-clefts and rwh-clefts, both of which place important information early in sentence; however, it-clefts were used more frequently than rwh-clefts for correction. In contrast, wh-cleft, which place key information in the

statement-final position was rarely used by any participants because the sentence-initial position, not the sentence-final position, is the preferred choice for marking contrast in Arabic and in English. This suggests that the avoidance of the *wh*-cleft after teaching is due to the typological universal that all languages appear to allow the initial position for contrast or emphatic constituents (Siewierska, 1994).

For preposing (focus fronting), L2 learners used this structure, similar to the native speakers, more frequently for clarification than for correction, so the IS instruction raised their awareness about this structure. However, compared to the native speakers, both stages of Saudi learners used preposing excessively for clarification and correction, suggesting that some students were either unsure about or unfamiliar with its constrained rules in discourse. L2 learners' high acceptance and use of preposing is due to the frequent use of preposing in the L1(Arabic). This supports findings by Boström Aronsson (2003) and Schachter and Rutherford (1979) that suggest that syntactic devices which are frequently used in the first language are more transferable and are therefore overused in the target language.

Nevertheless, the fundamental problem for L2 learners is that a certain word order pattern may be considered less marked in one language but may be more marked in another language. This finding largely confirms that, although preposing is more marked in the target language, L2 learners used this structure excessively because it was less marked in their L1. However, through explicit teaching and classroom activities that focus on the contextual use of preposing, L2 learners can be made gradually aware of its constraints. Sleeman (2004) also suggests that although L2 learners face challenges learning marked structures of the target language, positive transfer happens of these structures occurs when they are made an essential part of ESL classroom instruction.

For topicalisation (topic fronting), both stages of L2 learners, like the native speakers, used topicalisation moderately for correction and clarification, suggesting that IS instruction encourages students to use topicalisation. However, L2 learners sometimes used this structure more than NSs for two reasons: 1) topicalisation is frequently used in Arabic, which is a topic-oriented language; and 2) the similarity of the topicalised structure in both languages (i.e., the topicalised constituent is placed as the sentence theme or topic for contrast in both languages).

Furthermore, the data show that, similar to the native speakers, both stages of L2 learners continued to present broad and narrow focus using canonical word orders even after teaching. However, they began to use pronouns to present Given information and effectively tried to shift the Focus to the second part of a sentence to package information in accordance with English IS principles.

These findings confirm that teaching plays an important role in increasing L2 learners' awareness of English pragmalinguistic structures, encouraging and enabling L2 learners to use many syntactic constructions after teaching. This made L2 learners' responses more similar to those of native English speakers in term of the packaging of information, showing that teaching positively facilitates the acquisition of the syntactic constructions used to achieve IS (even though these structures are often overused).

In support of the quantitative data, the qualitative data also suggest that English pragmalinguistic structures are problematic even for proficient Saudi learners. In light of learners' avoidance of non-canonical word orders, input that focuses solely on grammar and vocabulary teaching is not effective in helping ESL learners become successful communicators in English and is unlikely to create a sufficient basis for L2 competence. These findings suggest

that teaching IS using both implicit and explicit methods plays a significant role in increasing students' knowledge and skill in the use of different pragmalinguistic English structures.

As far as the relation of grammatical and pragmatic development of interlanguage is considered, the qualitative data supports recent studies (Blyth, 2000; Kasper, 2000; Katz, 2000; McCarthy, 1991, 1998; Kerr, 2002; Callies and Keller, 2008) that have shown how the grammar and pragmatics of an L2 are best taught together in discourse. According to McCarthy (1998), this pedagogical technique attempts to focus students' awareness on a form within discourse:

‘analysing grammar as an aspect of discourse rather than as something that operates only within the boundaries of the clause or sentence . . . the types of choices that writers or speakers commonly deal with in production.’ (ibid., p. 263)

As pointed out earlier (in the answer of Q2), teaching grammar away from its function does not facilitate the use of language and does not lead to the pragmalinguistic development of interlanguage, so an implicit method, particularly a discourse focused method was employed in this study to help L2 learners consciously acquire these pragmatic structures.

The implicit method such as providing authentic materials and encouraging communication in the ESL classroom results in raised awareness and initial noticing of forms and their functions and positively enhances L2 learning (Long, 1991; Van Lier, 2001). Callies (2008) argues that using literary texts (similar to these implemented in this study; see Appendix I) help L2 learners notice how information can be foregrounded, highlighted or made more prominent because these types of text (short stories, letters, poems etc.) are full of pragmalinguistic examples.

In addition, the explicit method was also implemented to help learners notice any specific linguistic forms and complex patterns of the L2 that are hard to learn implicitly. For example, explicit methods were used to provide detailed explanations and examples of English IS principles, particularly the constraints of preposing. As referenced earlier (see 3.2.2 and 3.5), researchers' findings (i.e., Palacios-Martínez and Martínez-Insua, 2006) show that presenting a second language's syntactic structures used to achieve IS through formal instruction (explicit teaching) in a classroom setting leads to positive transfer.

Consequently, the majority of L2 learners in both levels had neither the explicit knowledge of the specific syntactic patterns of pragmalinguistic structures nor the knowledge of how to use them; however, after teaching, the learners became aware of and began to use many of these syntactic constructions.

In sum, both stages of Saudi learners of English preferred to use safe word orders before teaching due to their lack of their awareness of similarities in the structures of the two languages, so the responses were similar between the S1 and S2 groups. After IS instruction using both explicit and implicit methods, the learners' responses in both stages were also similar in terms of packaging information according to IS principles, and their responses were also similar to the native speakers. For example, many of the constructions used to achieve IS were used by the L2 learners in the different pragmatic scenarios after teaching, suggesting that the instruction had a positive impact on students' awareness of pragmalinguistic English structures. However, the influence of the first language and pragmatic universals still play a role in the acquisition of the target language even after teaching. Also, the interplay between the less-marked structures in the first language and the marked structures in the target language and vice versa lead to the excessive use or avoidance of these structure (see Figure 6.2). For example, due to the influence of the first language and the interplay between the less marked

and more marked structures between the two languages, the learners in both stages excessively used preposing and also due to typological universals that all languages appear to allow the initial position for contrast, they avoided using wh-clefts. Consequently, these factors differently interacted together before and after teaching.

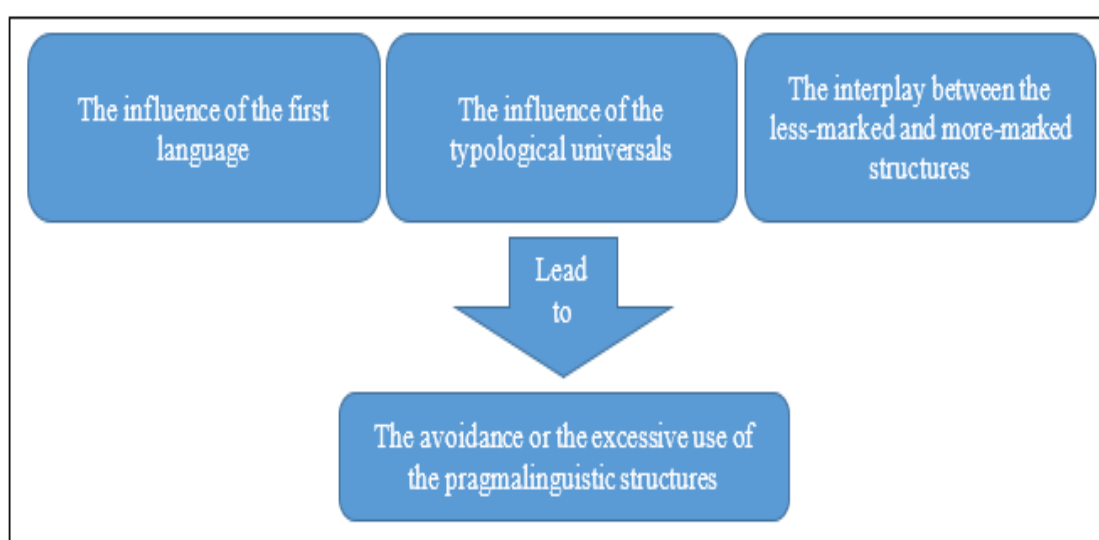


Figure 6.2: Factors in the excessive use or avoidance of pragmalinguistic structures after teaching.

In reference to the research Q4 (Will the teaching and acquisition of pragmalinguistic knowledge result in stable knowledge?), the data from the discourse completion task and the judgment task two months after the IS instruction show that both stages of L2 learners continued to use different structures in the target language. L2 learners in both stages used it-cleft most often in correcting after teaching and two months after the teaching; however, there was a significant increase in both groups' use of it-cleft for correction two months after the IS instruction. This finding confirms the finding that it-cleft was easily acquired and overused because this structure is a less-marked structure.

In addition, a closer look at the responses that included clefted structures reveals that S1 learners and S2 learners used *it*-cleft for correction and used *wh*-cleft for clarification more than before, but they still rarely used *wh*-cleft, confirming the idea that L2 learners still prefer to use the initial position to present contrast in a sentence.

L2 learners still used preposing most frequently for clarification two months after the teaching, but the frequency decreased, suggesting that L2 learners became more aware of the constraints of preposing over time. During the semester and after the instruction period, L2 learners in both stages started to identify the rules of preposing in different literary texts on their own, even when the teacher did not ask them to do so.

Furthermore, both S1 and S2 learners continued to use topicalisation in correcting and emphasising scenarios two months after the teaching, showing that IS instruction facilitates stable pragmalinguistic knowledge.

L2 learners also continued to productively organise information in sentences in accordance with the IS principles two months after the teaching. For example, they frequently used pronouns to present Given information and effectively shifted the Focus to the second part of a sentence. Their continued use of syntactic devices two months after the IS instruction suggests that their knowledge of IS remained stable and had been stored in long-term memory.

Teaching using explicit methods and implicit methods focuses learners' attention on the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language, and this form of 'noticing' is essential to move knowledge to long-term memory, and Schmidt (2010) notes that 'input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed' (*ibid.*, p. 721).

As such, the implicit method, particularly the functional method is very important in teaching pragmalinguistic structures because it helps L2 learners notice the relationship between the language structures along with their functions in a natural context as discussed in the answer of the former question (McCarthy, 1998; Callies, 2008). On the other hand, the explicit method is also important because some of the more difficult aspects of pragmalinguistics require more detailed explanation and practice. Explicit instruction focuses learners' attention on these difficulties and leads to stable knowledge. Mueller (2010) argues that explicit teaching can raise L2 learners' attention to any specific linguistic forms. By implementing these two methods in the ESL classroom, teachers can trigger learners' notice that leads to both stable knowledge and language competence.

According to the research Q5 (What is the current situation regarding IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia?), although past researchers (Gass, 1984; Klein, 1988) and more recent researchers (Carroll et al., 2000; Kerr, 2002; Callies 2009) have argued that information structure has been under-represented in ESL curricula, more recent textbooks in Saudi Arabia have not been improved in this regard.

Even across the large amount of learning materials examined for this study, textbooks do not explicitly discuss information structure, clarification and correction or deal in-depth with the syntactic and lexico-grammatical means used to realise information structure. ESL curricula for Saudi learners exhibit a great deficit in this regard, as they do not devote significant attention to the fundamental principles of IS packaging or the structures and functions of the most essential syntactic constructions.

Moreover, no textbook adopts a discourse/functional approach to the teaching of IS constructions. For example, the lexico-grammatical constructions (i.e., the emphatic 'do', the

emphatic reflexives ‘yourself and herself’, the pragmatic markers ‘really and actually’ and the focusing modifier ‘only’) are presented as grammar; their functional impact on IS in discourse is not addressed.

The lack of pragmalinguistic topics in ESL curricula at Saudi universities presents a barrier to learners’ successful acquisition of the target language. It causes the avoidance non-canonical word orders and using a form according to its function, leading to ill-formed or awkward sentences.

Given this shortcoming, I argue that L2 learning materials should explicitly address information structure and should deal with their pragmatic constructions in depth. These materials should adopt a functional/discoursal model for the teaching of these structures and should be designed to raise L2 learners’ awareness of the target language’s pragmalinguistic structures. Furthermore, I argue that both explicit and implicit teaching methods should also be used in ESL classrooms to help L2 learners notice and use pragmalinguistic structures. These methods could build a comparative view of a language and could illustrate what aspects of the two language (Arabic and English) are similar or different.

Explicit technique should be used to help learners become aware of the complex patterns of an L2 that are hard to learn implicitly, but implicit methods should also be used to create a natural context that helps L2 learners dive into the target language and consciously discover its syntactic structures used to achieve IS. Ideally, by combining these methods and providing the proper contextual setting along with detailed explanations, L2 learners will no longer perceive variant word orders or linguistic constructions of discourse pragmatics (IS) as ill-formed or even stylistically awkward.

Also, since IS information is largely absent in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia, I searched internationally for ESL books containing discourse pragmatics that could be used at Saudi universities. Out of the large number of ESL materials I examined, I only found two books that were valuable. These texts explicitly discuss IS and clearly detail related pragmatic constructions. Furthermore, these two books adopt a discoursal approach to the teaching syntactic constructions used to achieve IS, which I recommend.

The first text, *The Grammar Dimensions*, focuses on a communicative approach to grammar and on the function and meaning of linguistic forms. This textbook series was designed for the American market and is utilised in ESL classrooms in different American institutes. The fourth volume of the series (Frodesen and Eyring, 2000) includes excellent converge of the functional and grammatical characteristics of Focusing means, particularly correlating them to the use of Focus for contrast and clarification. The textbook divides IS into individual topics such as 'Focusing and Emphasising' (it-clefts and wh-clefts), 'Frontings Structures for Focus and Highlighting' (preposing) and 'Emphatic Structures' (emphatic do). These different units contain detailed illustrations, various examples and numerous activities related to these structures.

The other text that is an excellent reference for the ESL teachers in the United States is *The Grammar Book* (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). This book has a section dedicated to 'Focus and Emphasis' that describes various ways to accomplish Focus. This section presents phonological means (i.e., intonation and stress), lexico- grammatical means (i.e., emphatic reflective and emphatic do) and syntactic means (preposing and inversion) for achieving IS. This book is very useful for ESL teachers in general because it discusses the meaning and use of these means in detail, outlines teaching ideas/activities and recommends further reading.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

This chapter explains limitations of the study, makes suggestions for future research and builds conclusions.

7.1 Methodological Challenges and Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the sample of L2 learners who took the tests was only taken from one university (Yanbu Campus) in Saudi Arabia. In addition, due to the conservative nature of Saudi culture, all the learners were female, so it was impossible to shape a truly representative and a large group of L2 learners. Nevertheless, studying learners at two different stages and ensuring that the two groups were as homogenous as possible were crucial in the aim of generalising the study findings to a larger population.

Additionally, the combination of quantitative and qualitative research techniques in this study is an accepted means for exploring both L2 learners' competence about the pragmalinguistic structures and the role of teaching these structures in SLA. However, the research findings cannot be generalised from the qualitative methods alone due to the small number of the ESL teachers (6 ESL teachers). One of the advantages of combining a quantitative method (the discourse completion task and the judgment task) and a qualitative method (the interviews and the reflective journals) was the production of corroborating and converging evidence. All the findings observed in the discourse completion task were confirmed not only in the judgment task but also in the interviews and reflective journals.

Still, there were minor drawbacks that could be improved in future studies. First, although the discourse completion and judgement tasks were authentic instruments that assessed the learners' knowledge of the pragmalinguistic structures, they were also controlled instruments. Using the discourse completion task and the judgment task is different from real life in which people naturally express their words without constraints. Another drawback to the discourse completion and judgment tasks is that the structures being studied had to be elicited by triggering constituents and providing keywords. Due to L2 learners' limited awareness of L2 structures, it is not yet possible to produce particular linguistic means wholly automatically without giving any hints or helping words.

Another shortcoming of the judgment task is that the ranking scale in this task included only three options. However, this kind of scale was used to focus L2 learners' attention on a small number of options connected to the target language structures. Providing too many options in the ranking scale could have scattered learners' attention or allowed them to complete the test quickly by making random choices. By using fewer choices, this study aimed to require more selective effort on the part of the learner, thereby producing more reliable data.

Another small flaw is that although the syntactic constructions used to achieve IS are generally more used in spoken production, this study focused on learners' use of the syntactic English constructions in their writings because these constructions are easier to observe in written production (i.e., written tests or written stories) than in spoken production.

Another potential limitation of the IS tests is that IS has stylistic variation. In other words, there are no fixed answers in an IS test as there are in a grammar test. Different people could answer differentially and still be correct. For this reason, I included a substantial number of native speakers (ten) to provide a baseline for comparison between native and non-native speakers which helped identify the range of possible answers.

Another shortcoming of the grammar test was that it was designed to establish general grammatical competence without checking for competence in relation to the specific structures relevant to this study. For this reason, DCT and JT were used that had a more specific focus. The combination of tasks helped to determine the learners' grammatical competence along with their pragmalinguistic competence.

Finally, another limitation in this research was the repetition of the same IS test before teaching, after the teaching and two months after the teaching, which increases the bias of the research. However, there was always a period of at least six weeks between each test. In addition, the students were given some exercises during the teaching period that could mislead them on the exam items.

7.2 Suggestions for Further Studies

This research has given evidence for the view that Saudi ESL learners at early and advanced stages do not have knowledge about the existence of English information structure and are not fully aware of the importance of these structures. For instance, the production data showed that native English speakers used pragmatic structures such as *it*-clefts and topicalisation regularly while the L2 students strongly rejected non-canonical word orders before teaching. Still, more experimental research on beginner and advanced ESL students' IS knowledge is needed to verify and confirm these results. Such exploration should investigate some of the syntactic devices studied in this study as well as other weight structures in English, i.e., verb-particle movements or heavy noun phrase shift (for some corpus-based findings, see Callies, 2008).

Future studies on the use of lexico-grammatical constructions to realise discourse elements in the target language are also required to examine the interrelationship of pragmalinguistic and grammatical competency in SLA. More experimental research needs to explore L2 learners' knowledge of lexico-grammatical devices in written discourse and in speech (as noted in the introduction).

Another output from this study that although L2 learners' competence in the pragmalinguistic structures of the target language gradually increases after instruction, the first language still plays a role in their L2 production, so more in-depth studies are needed to expand on the influence of pragmalinguistic structures in SLA. These studies could examine, for instance, IL development in relation to the pragmalinguistic structures of both the first language and the target language.

7.3 The Conclusion

We cannot presume that semantics and syntax are the only regulators of sentence structure. A sentence may be semantically and grammatically well-formed, but it may still be contextually problematic (Finegan, 2008, p. 248). In context, constituents must be organised according to their functions for better understanding; this organisation is the concept of information structure. L2 learners' writing and conversation regularly sounds unidiomatic or different from that of English native speakers because L2 learners fail to organise information contextually using different pragmalinguistic structures such as *it*-clefts, topicalisation and preposing.

From a pragmatic point of view, the ESL learners need to know that pragmalinguistic structures are used in English texts to express a particular function such as contrast or clarification. Native

English speakers do not utilise these structures randomly; they select different choices to serve particular communicative needs or adhere to a specific style. Ward, Birner and Huddleston (2002) state the following:

‘The choice of one of the non-canonical means may be motivated by stylistic considerations, by the need for variety: a discourse consisting of clauses all of which follow the default pattern would likely be perceived as repetitive and tiresome.’ (ibid., p. 1372)

Syntactic constructions are essential in achieving IS, as Kuno (1972) highlights stating, ‘as there is no sentence without syntactic structure, there is no sentence without IS’ (ibid., p. 16). Due to the importance of IS in packaging information correctly in discourse, this study offers evidence that Saudi ESL learners can acquire English discourse pragmatics because the sequencing of discourse parts is directed by universal IS principles already present in Arabic and English. Furthermore, although the syntactic means for presenting pragmatic aspects are language-specific to some degree, Arabic ESL learners can acquire these structures because the pragmatic functions of these structures are somewhat similar in Arabic and English.

I have argued the importance of teaching discourse pragmatics in ESL classrooms using implicit and explicit methods because of learners’ lack of awareness of IS, the sparse amount of research that presents teaching and pedagogical aspects of IS and the absence of IS in ESL curricula. By implementing these methods, ESL teachers can enhance L2 learners’ language skills. The explicit and the implicit method attempt to raise L2 learners’ awareness of IS, familiarise them with different syntactic constructions for organising information and encourage them to use these structures in the proper contexts.

When L2 learners use pragmalinguistic structures, it makes the writing more similar to that of the native speakers (i.e., they produce less strange or awkward sentences). It helps them

translate ideas from Arabic to English by allowing them to organise these ideas contextually in the accordance with English IS principles instead of Arabic IS principles. It also improves the cohesion and the coherence of their writings and leads to clearer communication.

Thus, according to our findings, ESL curricula should include information on English IS and ESL teachers should adopt both implicit and explicit teaching methods to raise L2 learners' awareness of these structures. The evidence shows that these changes will help the L2 students develop some pragmalinguistic knowledge and will encourage them to actively utilise syntactic means to achieve IS in their written and spoken production in the future.

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Appendixes

Appendix (A):

Section 1: Ethical Approval from the University of Salford.



Research, Innovation and Academic
Engagement Ethical Approval Panel

Research Centres Support Team
G0.3 Joule House
University of Salford
M5 4WT

T +44(0)161 295 7012

www.salford.ac.uk/

24 November 2017

Dear Samah,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION AMR1718-02 – A Study of Discourse Pragmatics in Second Language Acquisition: Exploring the Acquisition of English Information Structure by L2 Saudi Learners.

Based on the information you provided, I am pleased to inform you that your application AMR1718-02 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project and/ or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting A&M-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Newbery'.

Dr Samantha Newbery
Chair of the Arts & Media Research Ethics Panel
Lecturer in Contemporary Intelligence Studies
School of Arts and Media
Crescent House, CH210
University of Salford
Salford M5 4WT
t: +44 (0) 161 295 3860
s.l.newbery@salford.ac.uk

Section 2: Consent Form to the Dean of Taibah University

Dear Dr. AbdulAllah.

I am a current PhD student in Applied Linguistics department at the University of Salford. As a part of my study, I am undertaking an exploration study entitled (The Syntax-Pragmatics Interface in L2: Aspects of Information Structure Teaching and Learning in a Saudi ESL Context). Information structure (IS) in linguistics is how to organise information in different contexts by using syntactic devices of information structure.

I want to examine the structural similarities and dissimilarities of English information structure, namely *focus* and *topic*, in Arabic and English. Furthermore, I want to investigate the relation between the information structure competence and the grammar competence in second language acquisition. Moreover, I want to explore the role of teaching information structure in second language learning and the current status of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia.

Eighty female L2 learners, from Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), six English second language (ESL) teachers, from different Taibah university branch campuses (Yanbu Campus, Madinah Campus and Badr Campus) in Saudi Arabia, and also ten English native speakers from Salafi Islamic Centre in UK will be participating in this study.

Preceding undertaking the study I require your consent to approach the following (I aim to recruit 80 students or more and 6 teachers from different Taibah University branch campuses in Saudi Arabia with your association to join in the study. I will select people to the study by utilising letter distributed to the participants, at Taibah University.

The study will go over three phases: The first phase of the study will be achieved bibliographically from literature by comparing Arabic information structure with English information structure.

The second phase of the study will be achieved by conducting pre-tests, IS instruction and post-tests to second language learners in order to examine their performance when the researcher integrate the information structure into her teaching. In addition, the ten native speakers of English will take the same tests that was taken by L2 learners in order to compare the learners' results with the results of the native speakers.

The third phase of the study will be achieved by asking the ESL teachers to use their reflexive journals during teaching the information structure and document their experiences, including their successes and difficulties, and any insights they had about their students. After that, audio recordings of in-depth interviews will be conducted with them, in order to gain their accurate feedback towards the differences between including and precluding IS in ESL classes.

The data collection will be carried out within 6 months, from January 2018 to June 2018, with the participants who are willing to participate (the ESL teachers, L2 learners, and English native speakers). The tests and the teaching will be conducted within the first three months (from January 2018 to March 2018). At the end of May 2018, the learners will be re-tested in order to explore whether the knowledge of IS was retained after a period of time or not, and in the following month, June 2018, the interviews with the teachers will be conducted.

Dangers and Harms: I do not imagine any risks to you partaking in this study other than those encountered in regular life.

Confidentiality

All of the information gathered will only be utilised for the research purposes and will be confidential. This means that teachers' and students' identities will be anonymous, in other words, no one besides the researcher will know their names. Whenever data from this study are published, their name will not be utilised. The data will be stored in a way that keeps them secure, for example, paper data in a locked cabinet in the staff room at the faculty of Arts and Humanities department at Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), electronic data in password protected file space on the university server. Only the researcher will have access to them. Any data from the tape recorder will be transferred and then deleted from it as soon as possible.

I can guarantee you that the study won't disrupt the workplace in any way and any data gathered will stay confidential. I am applying ethical approval for the study from The University of Salford.

My study is supervised by: Dr. Akis Kechagias

A.Kechagias@salford.ac.uk

If you have any question, please email me at s.a.s.abduljawad@edu.salford.ac.uk

Or contact me at this phone number: 0554613978

If you have any complain about the study, you may contact the Chair of the Ethical Approval Committee (Research) at A.Kechagias@salford.ac.uk

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Samah Abduljawad

Investigators' statement

I have fully explained this study to the dean of Taibah University.

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Dean's Consent

I have read the above data and have gotten answers to any inquiries I asked. I consent to this study to be conducted at Taibah University.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix (B): Consent Form to the Teachers

Dear teachers,

I am a current PhD student in Applied Linguistics department at the University of Salford. As a part of my study I am undertaking an exploration study entitled (The Syntax-Pragmatics Interface in L2: Aspects of Information Structure Teaching and Learning in a Saudi ESL Context). Information structure (IS) in linguistics is how to organise information in different contexts by using syntactic devices of information structure.

This form describes what the purpose of the study is and also your rights as a participant in the study. The decision is yours whether you would like to participate or not. If you decide to participate, please sign and date the last line of the form.

Explanation of the study

The first purpose of this study is designed to examine the structural similarities and dissimilarities of English information structure, namely *focus* and *topic*, in Arabic and English. The second objective of this study is to investigate the relation between the information structure competence and the grammar competence in second language acquisition. The third objective of this research is to explore the role of teaching information structure in second language learning and the current status of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia.

Eighty female L2 learners, from Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), six English second language (ESL) teachers, from different Taibah University branch campuses (Yanbu Campus,

Madinah Campus and Badr Campus) in Saudi Arabia, and also ten English native speakers from Salafi Islamic Centre in UK will be participating in this study.

The study will go over three phases: The first phase of the study will be achieved bibliographically from literature by comparing Arabic information structure with English information structure.

The second phase of the study will be achieved by conducting pre-tests, IS instruction and post-tests to second language learners in order to examine their performance when the researcher integrate the information structure into her teaching. In addition, the ten native speakers of English will take the same tests that was taken by L2 learners in order to compare the learners' results with the results of the native speakers.

The third phase of the study will be achieved by asking the ESL teachers to use their reflexive journals during teaching the information structure and document their experiences, including their successes and difficulties, and any insights they had about their students. After that, audio recordings of in-depth interviews will be conducted with them, in order to gain their accurate feedback towards the differences between including and precluding IS in ESL classes.

The data collection will be carried out within 6 months, from January 2018 to June 2018, with the participants who are willing to participate (the ESL teachers, L2 learners, and English native speakers). The tests and the teaching will be conducted within the first three months (from January 2018 to March 2018). At the end of May 2018, the learners will be re-tested in order to explore whether the knowledge of IS was retained after a period of time or not, and in the following month, June 2018, the interviews with the teachers will be conducted.

Dangers and Harms: I do not imagine any risks to you partaking in this study other than those encountered in regular life.

Confidentiality

All of the information gathered will only be utilised for the research purposes and will be confidential. This means that teachers' and students' identities will be anonymous, in other words, no one besides the researcher will know their names. Whenever data from this study are published, their name will not be utilised. The data will be stored in a way that keeps them secure, for example, paper data in a locked cabinet in the staff room at the faculty of Arts and Humanities department at Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), electronic data in password protected file space on the university server. Only the researcher will have access to them. Any data from the tape recorder will be transferred and then deleted from it as soon as possible.

Your participation

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If at any point you change your mind and no longer want to participate, you can withdraw from this study anytime you want and without any consequences.

Investigators' statement

I have fully discussed this study to the participants. I have explained what the participants are required to do and I have answered all the inquiries that the participants have asked.

Signature of the investigator _____ Date _____

Participants' consent

I have read the information given in this informed Consent Form. All my inquiries have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Include your name, signature and email address in the event that you might want to be interviewed with the tape-recorded.

Name:	Signature
-------	-----------

Email Address:

My study is supervised by: Dr. Akis Kechagias

A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

If you have any question, please email me at s.a.s.abduljawad@edu.salford.ac.uk

Or contact me at this phone number: 0554613978

If you have any complain about the study, you may contact the Chair of the Ethical Approval Committee (Research) at A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

Thank you for your time.

Appendix (C): Consent Form to L2 Learners

Dear Students,

I am a current PhD student in Applied Linguistics department at the University of Salford. As a part of my study I am undertaking an exploration study entitled (The Syntax-Pragmatics Interface in L2: Aspects of Information Structure Teaching and Learning in a Saudi ESL Context). Information structure (IS) in linguistics is how to organise information in different contexts by using syntactic devices of information structure.

This form determines what the aim of the study is and also your rights as a participant in the study. The decision is yours whether you would like to participate or not. If you decide to participate, please sign and date the last line of the form.

Explanation of the study

The first purpose of this study is designed to examine the structural similarities and dissimilarities of English information structure, namely *focus* and *topic*, in Arabic and English. The second objective of this study is to investigate the relation between the information structure competence and the grammar competence in second language acquisition. The third objective of this research is to explore the role of teaching information structure in second language learning and the current status of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia.

Eighty female L2 learners, from Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), six English second language (ESL) teachers, from different Taibah University branch campuses (Yanbu Campus,

Madinah Campus and Badr Campus) in Saudi Arabia, and also ten English native speakers from Salafi Islamic Centre in UK will be participating in this study.

The study will go over three phases: The first phase of the study will be achieved bibliographically from literature by comparing Arabic information structure with English information structure.

The second phase of the study will be achieved by conducting pre-tests, teaching the information structure and post-tests to second language learners in order to examine their performance when the researcher integrate the information structure into her teaching. In addition, the ten native speakers of English will take the same tests that was taken by L2 learners in order to compare the learners' results with the results of the native speakers.

The third phase of the study will be achieved by asking the ESL teachers to use their reflexive journals during teaching the information structure and document their experiences, including their successes and difficulties, and any insights they had about their students. After that, audio recordings of in-depth interviews will be conducted with them, in order to gain their accurate feedback towards the differences between including and precluding IS in ESL classes.

The data collection will be carried out within 6 months, from January 2018 to June 2018, with the participants who are willing to participate (the ESL teachers, L2 learners, and English native speakers). The tests and the teaching will be conducted within the first three months (from January 2018 to March 2018). At the end of May 2018, the learners will be re-tested in order to explore whether the knowledge of IS was retained after a period of time or not, and in the following month, June 2018, the interviews with the teachers will be conducted.

Dangers and Harms: I do not imagine any risks to you partaking in this study other than those encountered in regular life.

Confidentiality

All of the information gathered will only be utilised for the research purposes and will be confidential. This means that teachers' and students' identities will be anonymous, in other words, no one besides the researcher will know their names. Whenever data from this study are published, their name will not be utilised. The data will be stored in a way that keeps them secure, for example, paper data in a locked cabinet in the staff room at the faculty of Arts and Humanities department at Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), electronic data in password protected file space on the university server. Only the researcher will have access to them. Any data from the tape recorder will be transferred and then deleted from it as soon as possible.

Your participation

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If at any point you change your mind and no longer want to participate, you can withdraw from this study anytime you want and it will not impact your grades. Also, your performance on the research tests will not impact your grades.

Investigators' statement

I have fully discussed this study to the participants. I have explained what the participants are required to do and I have answered all the questions that the participants have asked.

Signature of the investigator _____ Date _____

Participants' consent

I have read the information provided in this informed Consent Form. All my inquiries have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Your Signature _____

Date _____

My study is supervised by: Dr. Akis Kechagias

A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

If you have any question, please email me at s.a.s.abduljawad@edu.salford.ac.uk

Or contact me at this phone number: 0554613978

If you have any complain about the study, you may contact the Chair of the Ethical Approval Committee (Research) at A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

Thank you for your time

Appendix (D): Consent Form in Arabic to L2 Learners

موافقة على المشاركة في بحث دراسي

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

عزيزتي الطالبة..

انتي مدعوة للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة (بعنوان دراسة الكفاءة اللغوية الضمنية في اكتساب اللغة الثانية: اكتشاف اكتساب قواعد التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية من قبل المتعلمين السعوديين للغة الإنجليزية) والمقامة في جامعة طيبة والتي تهدف إلى مقارنة التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية الإنجليزية مع التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية العربية ومعرفة مدى تأثير تدريس هذه التراكيب الانجليزية في تطوير وتحسين الطالبات في اكتساب اللغة الانجليزية كاللغة ثانية . التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية هيا عبارة عن تنظيم وترتيب المعلومات في الجملة باستخدام القواعد الضمنية الخاصة للغة .

وللتحقيق أهداف البحث سوف تقوم هذه الدراسة على ثلاثة مراحل أساسية:

المرحلة الأولى للبحث: سوف تقوم على مقارنة التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية العربية مع التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية الانجليزية من خلال الرجوع إلى الأدب العربي والأدب الانجليزي.

المرحلة الثانية للبحث: تتحقق المرحلة الثانية بعمل ثلاث خطوات.

الخطوة الاولى: عمل اختبار مسبق للطالبات (المستوى الأول والمستوى المتقدم) لتحديد مدى معرفتهم بقواعد اللغة والتراكيب اللغوية الضمنية وهل تطور الطالبات في قواعد اللغة يؤدي الى تطوّرهم في التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية للغة الثانية.

الخطوة الثانية: تدريس الطالبات التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية للغة الانجليزية. إضافة إلى ذلك فإن المعلمات خلال تدريس الطالبات سوف يستخدمون دفاتر تقويم يسجلون فيها جميع ملاحظاتهم وخبراتهم خلال تدريسهم التراكيب اللغوية للغة الإنجليزية مثلا تدوين الصعوبات والتحديات التي واجهتهم خلال تدريسهم وماهي افضل الوسائل التي تم استخدامها خلال تدريس هذه التراكيب .

الخطوة الثالثة : إعادة اختبار التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية للطالبات مرة أخرى وذلك للتأكد هل التدريس يعتبر عامل فعال في مساعدة الطالبات على اكتساب التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية للغة الثانية (اللغة الإنجليزية) بنجاح أم لا. بعد شهرين من تدريس الطالبات القواعد اللغوية الضمنية للغة الإنجليزية سوف يتم إعادة اختبار التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية للمرة الثالثة وذلك للتأكد من مدى ثبات القواعد اللغوية الضمنية للغة الثانية في أذهان الطالبات .

جميع هذه الاختبارات سوف توزع على شريحة مقدارها ثمانون طالبة من جامعة طيبة (أربعون طالبة من المستوى الاول و أربعون طالبة من المستوى الرابع ما قبل التخرج من الجامعة).

الخطوة الثالثة تهدف إلى مقارنة إجاباتهم مع المتحدثين الأصليين للغة الإنجليزية وذلك لأن إجابات المتحدثين الأصليين للغة هيا المعيار الذي يحتذى به في هذه الدراسة. أي أن اختبار التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية الإنجليزية سوف يجرى أولاً إلى عشرة ناطقين أصليين للغة الإنجليزية في المدرسة الإسلامية في مانشستر ببريطانيا وذلك ليكون اختبار سوف الأساس في عمل المقارنات مع الطالبات قبل وبعد تدريسهم هذه التراكيب اللغوية الإنجليزية.

المرحلة الثالثة للبحث: تتمثل بعد الانتهاء من التدريس وتكوين جميع الملاحظات المتعلقة بالتدريس سيتم إجراء مقابلات شخصية مع ستة معلمات الآتي يدرسن اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة طيبة في مختلف فروعها مثل فرع ينبع، فرع بدر وأيضاً فرع المدينة وذلك للتأكد من مدى فعالية التدريس في مساعدة الطالبات في اكتساب التراكيب اللغوية الضمنية للغة الثانية. كما تهدف المقابلات للتعرف على وضع مناهج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية من حيث هل تهتم هذه المناهج تحديداً بالتراكيب اللغوية الضمنية أم لا.

ومن أجل مساعدت الباحث في تحقيق أهداف الدراسة أرجوا التكرم بالاجابة على أسئلة الاختبارات بعناية لأن ذلك يؤدي إلى التوصل إلى نتائج بحثية دقيقة .

الأخطار في هذه الدراسة:

لايوجد أي أخطار من هذه الدراسة إلا اذ حدث شيء خارج عن ارادتنا لا سمح الله..

خصوصية الدراسة:

جميع المعلومات ستكون في غاية السرية ولن يطلع عليها أحد غيري (الباحث) من ضمنها خصوصية الاسم وأيضا أي شيء يخص المشاركين فهو في غاية السرية.. سوف يتم حفظ المعلومات داخل الحاسوب الألي الخاص بالجامعة وودخل الدولاب في غرفة المعلمات في الجامعة. كما ان الهدف من جمع المعلومات فقط لأهداف بحثية فقط لا غير . كما أيضا أود أن أفيدك علما بأن درجات الإختيار لن تؤثر كليا على درجاتك الجامعية أبدا ويمكنك معرفة درجاتك ان أردت. كما انه لكي الحرية في حال قررتي عدم المشاركة أو التوقف عن إكمال الإختبارات في أي وقت.

مشرف بحثي في الدكتوراة: سعادة الدكتور إيكس

من جامعة سالفرد بمدينة مانشستر في بريطانيا

إيميله: A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

اذ كان لديك أي إستفسار فأرجوا التواصل معي على بريدي الالكتروني: s.a.s.abduljawad@edu.salford.ac.uk

أو على رقمي الجوال: ٠٥٥٥٤١٣٩٦٦

أو على جوالي البريطاني في حالة عدم تواجدي في السعودية: ٧٤٩١٠٠٠٤٥٤ (+٤٤)

اذا لديكي اي مشكلة فيما يتعلق بهذه الدراسة فأرجوا التواصل عل هذا الايميل:

A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

اخيراً إذا قررتي المشاركة في هذه الدراسة فأرجوا التوقيع بالموافقة أسفل هذا الطلب وتذكري عزيزتي الطالبة أنه بمجرد إمضاءك على هذا الطلب فإنك توافق اختياريًا على التعاون معي بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة وأن المعلومات السابقة قد شرحت لك شفهيًا ولكي جزيل الشكر لتعاونك معي في إجراء هذا البحث.

جعله الله في ميزان حسناتك.

إمضاء الباحث

التاريخ

إمضاء المشاركة في البحث

التاريخ

Appendix (E): Consent Form to the Head of Salafi Islamic Centre in Manchester

Dear Mrs. Lula,

I am a current PhD student in Applied Linguistics department at the University of Salford. As a part of my study I am undertaking an exploration study entitled (The Syntax-Pragmatics Interface in L2: Aspects of Information Structure Teaching and Learning in a Saudi ESL Context). Information structure (IS) in linguistics is how to organise information in different contexts by using syntactic devices of information structure.

The study aims to explore the use of syntactic constructions of IS by second language (L2) learners and the role of teaching IS in second language learning.

I want to examine the structural similarities and dissimilarities of English information structure, namely *focus* and *topic*, in Arabic and English. Furthermore, I want to investigate the relation between the information structures competence and the grammar competence in second language acquisition. Moreover, I want to explore the role of teaching information structure in second language learning and the current status of IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia.

Eighty female L2 learners, from Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), six English second language (ESL) teachers, from different Taibah University branch campuses (Yanbu Campus, Madinah Campus and Badr Campus) in Saudi Arabia, and also ten English native speakers from Salafi Islamic Centre in UK will be participating in this study.

Preceding undertaking the study, I require your consent to approach the following (I aim to recruit ten native speakers who are above of eighteen years old from Salafi Centre with your association to join in the study). I will select people to the study by utilising letter distributed to the participants, at Islamic Centre.

The study will go over three phases: The first phase of the study will be achieved bibliographically from literature by comparing Arabic information structure with English information structure.

The second phase of the study will be achieved by conducting pre-tests, IS instruction and post-tests to second language learners in order to examine their performance when the researcher integrate the information structure into her teaching. In addition, the ten native speakers of English will take the same tests that was taken by L2 learners in order to compare the learners' results with the results of the native speakers.

The third phase of the study will be achieved by asking the ESL teachers to use their reflexive journals during teaching information structure and document their experiences, including their successes and difficulties, and any insights they had about their students. After that, audio recordings of in-depth interviews will be conducted with them, in order to gain their accurate feedback towards the differences between including and precluding the IS in ESL classes.

The data collection will be carried out within 6 months, from January 2018 to June 2018, with the participants who are willing to participate (the ESL teachers, L2 learners, and English native speakers). The tests and the teaching will be conducted within the first three months (from January 2018 to March 2018). At the end of May 2018, the learners will be re-tested in order to explore whether the knowledge of IS was retained after a period of time or not, and in the following month, June 2018, the interviews with the ESL teachers will be conducted.

Dangers and Harms: I do not imagine any risks to you partaking in this study other than those encountered in regular life.

Confidentiality

All of the information collected will be confidential and will only be used for the research purposes. This means that teachers' and students' identities will be anonymous, in other words, no one besides the researcher will know their names. Whenever data from this study are published, their name will not be used. The data will be stored in a way that keeps them secure, for example, paper data in a locked cabinet in the staff room at the faculty of Arts and Humanities department at Taibah University (Yanbu Campus), and electronic data in password protected file space on the university server. Only the researcher will have access to them. Moreover, any data from the tape recorder will be transferred and then deleted from it as soon as possible.

I can guarantee you that the study won't disrupt the workplace in any way and any data gathered will stay confidential. I am applying ethical approval for the study from The University of Salford.

My study is supervised by: Dr. Akis Kechagias

A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

If you have any question, please email me at s.a.s.abduljawad@edu.salford.ac.uk

Or contact me at this phone number: 0554613978

If you have any complain about the study, you may contact the Chair of the Ethical Approval Committee (Research) at A.Kechagias@Salford.ac.uk

Thank you for your time

Regards,

Samah Abduljawad

Investigators' statement

I have fully explained this study to the head of Salafi Islamic centre.

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Head's Consent

I have read the above data, and have gotten answers to any inquiries I asked. I consent to this study to be conducted at Salafi Islamic Centre in Manchester.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix (F): Qualitative Phase

Section 1: General Information

1- Could you please tell me some general information about your teaching experience?

For example (What level do you teach, and how long have you been in teaching English?)

Section 2: Questions

1. Tell me what do you know about IS?

The importance of the IS:

2. Do you think it is important to teach IS? Why do you hold this view?

3. What is the current situation regarding IS in ESL curricula in Saudi Arabia?

4. Could you tell me please which methods have you used to teach IS?

5. After teaching your students the principles of IS, did you notice any improvement in students' skills such as writing? Did any pragmalinguistic knowledge (IS) gained from teaching remain in their minds after a period of time?

6. What were the most syntactic devices of IS used by students?

7. In your opinion, do you think that teaching IS is challenging? Why?

(What are some challenges that face you when you teach IS?)

8. Would you like to add any suggestions or comments?

Appendix (G) The English Grammar Test

Please circle the best option to complete the following sentence.

Q1: I come _____ Saudi Arabia.

- c. from
- d. to
- e. in
- f. at

Q2: There are not _____ people here.

- F. many
- G. much
- H. a lot
- J. too much

Q3: Sara _____ work tomorrow.

- A. is not going
- B. is not going to
- C. is not
- D. is not to

Q4: I would like _____ information, please.

- F. an
- G. piece
- H. some
- J. a piece

Q5: _____ to school yesterday?

- A. Do you walk
- B. Did you walked
- C. Have you walked
- D. Did you walk

Q6: I went to the shop _____ some candies.

- F. to buy
- G. for buy
- H. for buying
- J. buy

Q7: Could you tell me _____?

- A. the bus station is where
- B. is where the bus station
- C. where is the bus station
- D. where the bus stop is

Q8: The movie _____ by Tomas Louis.

- F. directing
- G. did directed
- H. was directed
- J. directed

Q9: Is Maria _____ Sara?

- A. shorter than
- B. shorter
- C. as shorter as
- D. more short

Q10: That smells amazing! What _____

- F. do you cooking?
- G. are you cook?
- H. are you cooking?
- J. do you cook?

Q11 : 'Where is the _____ train station, please?'

- A. nearest
- B. near
- C. more near
- D. most near

Q12: Would you mind _____ the door, please?

- F. closing
- G. closed
- H. to close
- J. close

Q13: He is interested _____ learning English.

- A. on
- B. for
- C. in
- D. to

Q14: How long _____ Spanish?

- F. do you learn
- G. you learn
- H. are you learning
- J. have you been learning

Q15: Do you think it is _____ snow tomorrow?

- A. going to
- B. will
- C. to
- D. go to

Q16: Jack and _____ are attending the meeting.

- F. mine
- G. I
- H. myself
- J. me

Q17: Can you tell me when _____ ?

- A. the bus leaves
- B. does the bus leave
- C. leaves the bus

D. does leave the bus

Q18: I _____ to United Kingdom last year?

- F. gone
- G. go
- H. goed
- J. went

Q19: When Jana _____ back tonight, she will cook lunch.

- A. come
- B. will come
- C. comes
- D. shall come

Q20: We arrived _____ Saudi Arabia three days ago.

- F. to
- G. at
- H. on
- J. in

Q21: 'Why are you so hungry?' 'Well, I _____ breakfast this morning.'

- A. had not
- B. did not
- C. did not have
- D. have not

Q22: You _____ better see a dentist.

- F. did
- G. would
- H. should
- J. had

Q23: She drives really _____, but her sister drives quite _____.

- A. fastly, slowly
- B. fastly, slow
- C. fast, slowly
- D. fast, slow

Q24: 'Did you speak to Isaac?' 'No, I've _____ seen him.

- F. nearly
- G. always
- H. often
- J. hardly

Q25: She told me that she _____ in Saudi Arabia many years ago.

- A. has been working
- B. had been working
- C. has worked
- D. had been worked

Q26: He looks _____ he is going to be sick.

- F. as if
- G. as
- H. likes
- J. if

Q27: The best way to learn a language is _____ a little every day.

- A. speak
- B. in speaking
- C. to speaking
- D. by speaking

Q28: If I had more time, I _____ go shopping.

- F. would
- G. will
- H. am going to
- J. want to

Q29: Put _____ bag on _____ table, then give me _____ orange and _____ cup of milk.

- A. the, the, a, a
- B. a, a, the, the
- C. a, the, an, the
- D. the, the, an, a

Q30: I need four _____ and three _____ for the soup.

- F. tomatoes/carrots
- G. tomatoes/ carottes
- H. tomato/carrot
- J. tomato/carrots

Q31: It _____ my sister.

- A. is ages that I did not see
- B. is ages since I saw
- C. was ages that I have not seen
- D. were ages that I have not seen

Q32: He _____ have long hair, but now it is short.

- F. use to
- G. before
- H. did not
- J. used to

Q33: You are not allowed to use your mobile phone so _____.

- A. there is no point in leaving it on
- B. there is no point to leave it on
- C. it is no point to leave it on
- D. it is no point in leaving it on

Q34: You _____ the cleaning. I would have done it tonight.

- F. need not have done
- G. could not have done
- H. cannot have done
- J. would not have done

Q35: I would not say that to him if I _____ you.

- A. were
- B. am
- C. would be
- D. was

Q36: We would never have had the accident if you _____ so fast.

- F. would not been driving

- G. had not been driving
- H. had driven
- J. would not drive

Q37: The school _____ by our government.

- A. was built
- B. was build
- C. build
- D. built

Q38: Where _____ they from?

- F. am
- G. are
- H. is
- J. is not

Q39: You must drive _____ because of the snow.

- A. carefully
- B. careful
- C. carefullly
- D. carefull

Q40: By this time next year, I _____ all my exams.

- F. will have finished
- G. will finish
- H. finish
- J. have finished

Amended from British Study Centres' Free Online English Grammar test (n.d.)

Appendix (H) Elicitation Tasks – English Version

Section A: The Discourse Completion Task

Part I

In this section, you will be given some real situations and questions related to these situations. There is usually more than one way to form an answer. How we answer it relies on many aspects, such as correcting, confirming and clarifying what we think is the most essential piece of information.

For each given passage, your friend will make a wrong or right assumption or will ask you a question related to a particular piece of information that you may need to clarify, correct or present.

Please imagine each situation and give a complete answer according to the context. There are no wrong or right answers, just follow your intuition.

Situation 1:

Your neighbour is building a tree house. Then, your friend (Maria) visits you and hears a loud noise.

Maria: What is that noise?

Your response: _____

Situation 2:

You always go to school by car.

Your friend: I bet the school bus is very crowded. How do you go to school every day? By bus?

Your response: _____

Situation 3:

You are sitting with your friends and one of them (Sara) is talking about how your sister is an active girl who likes all kinds of sports. You tell Sara the opposite, that your sister is actually not active and does not like sports, but quite oddly . . .

(cricket, likes, she, a lot)

Complete the passage above by using the words between the brackets above if possible.

Situation 4:

You invited your three friends (Sara, Maria, Dania) to have dinner at your house. Your mum prepared a variety of tasty foods such as chicken, steak, soup and pastries, and then she left the house.

All your friends came to your house and had dinner with you. They told you that the food was tasty. Sara told you that she ate all the chicken because it was particularly good.

Your mum (the next day): How was the dinner yesterday? Who ate the steak?

Your response: Well, I do not know about the steak, but_____

Situation 5:

Your friend (Sara) comes to visit you, and your neighbours are building a tree house.

Sara: What a noise! What are your neighbours building?

Your response: _____

Situation 6:

You tell your friend (Sara) at school about some newly released kids' movies such as *Peter Rabbit* and *Wonder*. You tell her that you watched *Wonder* yesterday and that it was amazing.

Sara: Sorry, which movie did you watch yesterday? *Peter Rabbit*?

Your response: No, _____

Situation 7:

You told your friend that you are going shopping to look for a scarf. Then, you went to a shop and bought one.

Your friend (days later): Remind me again, what did you want to buy?

Your response: _____

Situation 8:

In general, you do not like reading; however, you are interested in reading books about animals.

One day, your neighbour saw you reading books about animals in front of your house.

Your friend: I guess your favourite hobby is reading!

Write your response using brackets words below if possible.

(books about animals, enjoy, I , a lot)

Your response: No, my favourite hobby is not reading but_____

Situation 9:

Your younger sister (Sara) baked a cake by herself. Then, your friend (Maria) came to your house, tasted your sister's cake and really liked it.

Your friend: Wow, who made the cake? I do not believe that Sara made the cake!

Your response: Yeah, I know it is hard to believe, but_____

Situation 10

Your dad is very angry because someone crashed his car.

Your friend: Why is your dad angry?

Your response: _____

Situation 11:

Your friend (Sara) knew that you were going to meet either your mum or dad today.

In the morning, you met with your mum, and you had lunch with her before the evening.

In the evening, Sara phoned you.

Sara: Did you meet either of your parents today?

Your response: _____

Situation 12:

You do not know who ate your sister's sandwich, but you saw your younger brother (Jusuf) eating her sweets.

Your sister: What happened to my sandwich? Who ate it?

Your response: I do not know about your sandwich, but _____

Situation 13:

Your friend (Sara) knows that your neighbour (Maria) always likes to build things like tree houses and bird houses.

One day, Sara comes to visit you while your neighbour (Maria) is building a storage room.

Sara: What is your neighbour building again?

Your response: _____

Situation 14:

You are telling your friend that, although you do not like your Maths teacher, you respect her for all her effort.

Your friend: I bet some people are born teachers. Who is it again that you respect for her teaching? Your Science teacher?

Your response: _____

Situation 15:

You told your friend that, after you graduate from college, you are going to go to either Paris or Madrid. After your graduation, your mum gives you a ticket to Paris.

Your friend: Hey “bro” will you go to Paris or Madrid?

Your response: _____

Situation 16:

You went to a fast food restaurant and ordered a burger.

The assistant: Sorry, what was your order again? A pizza, or a burger?

Write your response by using the brackets words below if possible.

(please, a burger, ordered, I)

Your response: _____

Section B: The Judgment Task

Part II

In the following, you will be given some situations and questions that may be familiar, as most of them appeared in the first task. You will also recognise the scenarios, i.e., responding to situations and answering your friend's questions. In this section, however, you will be given a set of possible responses to evaluate.

For each given passage, your friend will make a wrong or right assumption or will ask you a question related to a particular piece of information that you may need to clarify, correct or present.

Imagine each situation. Then, below each text passage you will find a set of alternative responses (clarifying, correcting or presenting). Please indicate to what degree you think the given alternatives fit in the given context by ranking them in order of preference on a scale from 1 to 3. If you think a sentence is a very good option among other options, mark box 3. If you think a sentence is not an appropriate option at all, mark box 1. Do this for every sentence provided. There are no wrong or right answers, just follow your intuition.

If you think that none of the provided options are suitable, feel free to offer your own answer on the provided line.

Example:

You tell your friend that your favourite food is pasta.

Your friend: I am sure most people in the world like pizza What is your favourite food again, pizza?

Your response:

	1	2	3
a. No, pasta I like.	✓		
b. No, it is pasta that I like, not pizza.			✓
c. No, I like pasta.		✓	
d. Own suggestion:			
<hr/>			
<hr/>			

Situation1:

You are telling your friend that, although you do not like your Maths teacher, you respect her for all her effort.

Your friend: I bet some people are born teachers. Who is it again that you respect for her teaching? Your Science teacher?

Your response: No,

	1	2	3
a. my Maths teacher I respect.			
b. it is my Maths teacher who I respect.			
c. who I respect is my Maths teacher.			
d. Own suggestion:			

Situation 2:

Your friend (Sara) knew that you were going to meet either your mum or dad today.

In the morning, you met with your mum, and you had lunch with her before the evening.

In the evening, Sara phoned you.

Sara: Did you meet either of your parents today?

Your response: Yes,

	1	2	3
a. it was my mum who I met today.			

b. I met my mum today.			
c. who I met today was my mum.			
d. Own suggestion:			
<hr/>			
<hr/>			

Situation 3:

You do not know who ate your sister's sandwich, but you saw your younger brother (Jusuf) eating her sweets.

Your sister: What happened to my sandwich? Who ate it?

Your response:

	1	2	3
a. I do not know about your sandwich, but Jusuf ate your sweets.			
b. I do not know about your sandwich, but your sweets Jusuf ate.			
c. I do not know about your sandwich, but it was Jusuf who ate your sweets.			

d. Own suggestion:

Situation 4

You tell your friend (Sara) at school about some newly released kids' movies such as *Peter Rabbit* and *Wonder*. You tell her that you watched *Wonder* yesterday and that it was amazing.

Sara: Sorry, which movie did you watch yesterday? *Peter Rabbit*?

Your response: No,

	1	2	3
a. <i>Wonder</i> was what I watched yesterday.			
b. <i>Wonder</i> I watched yesterday.			
c. I watched <i>Wonder</i> yesterday.			
d. Own suggestion:			
<hr/>			
<hr/>			

Situation 5:

Your younger sister (Sara) baked a cake by herself. Then, your friend (Maria) came to your house, tasted your sister's cake and really liked it.

Your friend: Wow, who made the cake? I do not believe that Sara made the cake!

Your response: Yeah, I know it is hard to believe, but....

	1	2	3
a. Sara was the one who made the cake.			
b. Sara made the cake.			
c. the cake Sara made.			
d. Own suggestion:			

Situation 6:

You are sitting with your friends and one of them (Sara) is talking about how your sister is an active girl who likes all kinds of sports. You tell Sara the opposite, that your sister is actually not active and does not like sports, but quite oddly . . .

Your response:

	1	2	3
a. she likes cricket a lot.			
b. cricket she likes a lot.			
c. cricket is what she likes a lot.			
d. Own suggestion:			
<hr/>			
<hr/>			

Situation 7:

You always go to school by car.

Your friend: I bet the school bus is very crowded. How do you go to school every day? By bus?

Your response: No,

	1	2	3
a. I go to school by car.			
b. it is by car that I go to school.			
c. by car I go to school.			
d. Own suggestion:			

Situation 8:

You told your friend that, after you graduate from college, you are going to go to either Paris or Madrid. After your graduation, your mum gives you a ticket to Paris.

Your friend: Hey “bro” will you go to Paris or Madrid?

Your response:

	1	2	3
a. The place where I will be going is to Paris.			
b. To Paris I will be going.			
c. I will be going to Paris.			

d. Own suggestion:

Appendix (I) Some Teaching Materials Used in the Study

Part 1: Poem of John Donne's Aire and Angells

Twice or thrice had I loved thee,
Before I knew thy face or name;
So in a voice, so in a shapeless flame,
Angells affect us oft, and worship'd bee,
Still when, **to where** thou wert, I came, wert=were
Some lovely glorious **nothing** I did see.
But since **my soule**, whose child love is,
Takes limes of flesh, and else could nothing doe, limmes=limbs
More subtile than the parent is, subtile=subtle
Love must not be, but take **a body** too,
And therefore what thou wert, and who,
I bid Love aske, and now
That it assume **thy body**, I allow,
And fixe it selfe in thy lip, eye, and brow.
Whilst thus to ballast love,
I thought, (to a ship) ballast=giving stability
And so more steddily to have gone,
With wares which would sink admiration,
I saw, I had loves pinnace overfraught, pinnace=small boat
Ev'ry haire for love to worke upon
Is much too much, **some fitter** must be sought;
For, nor in nothing, nor in things

Extreme, and scatt'ring bright, can love inhere;
Then as an Angell, face, and wings
Of aire, not pure as it, yet pure doth weare,
So thy love may be my loves spheare;
Just such disparitie
As is twixt Aire and Angells puritie,
'Twixt womens love, and mens will ever bee.

(Donne, 2001, p 19)

Part 2: A Letter

Form a (An odd written text)

Dear Sana Jussif,

Me, I am sitting here up in my bed writing to you.

What is outside my window is a massive backyard surrounded by trees and it is a rose carpet that is in the middle of the backyard.

When it was full of pink and golden roses was in the spring. Here you would love it. It is you who should come and spend some time with me; what I have got is plenty of rooms.

Best wishes,

Sara Ali

(Adopted from McCarthy, 1991, p. 53)

Form b (A natural written text)

Dear Sana Jussif,

I am sitting here up in my bed writing to you. A massive backyard surrounded by trees is outside my window and a rose carpet is in the middle of the backyard.

It was full of pink and golden roses in the spring. You would love it here.

You should come and spend some time with me; I have got plenty of rooms.

Best wishes,

Sara Ali

(Adopted from McCarthy, 1991, p.53)

Appendix (J) Lesson Plan Guide

Date: 5th March 2020

Course: Originally created by Samah Abduljawad

Level: The students are at advanced level.

Ages of Students: The students are between 20 and 22 years old.

Expected Number: There are 20 students in the class.

Outcomes: Students will be able to

- identify English IS.
- organise information in discourse in accordance with IS.
- write sentences using syntactic constructions, particularly preposing, to convey pragmatic meanings.

Text (if basis of lesson)

I will give my own text to the students.

Please use the sections below to outline your lesson. Include how long you expect each section to last. When you are done explain your choices.

It's a One-hour class. The outline of the lesson is divided in the following way:

Bridge-in	5 min
Objectives	3 min
Controlled Practice	10 min
Presentation	10 min

Less Controlled Practice	10 min
Free Practice	17 min
Summary	5 min

Explain Evaluation Planned (with examples):

The students will be evaluated for IS test which will be conducted at the end of March. The IS test includes two sections: In the first section, students are going to write sentences using different syntactic constructions to achieve IS. In the second section, they are going to compare the suggested answers to each other by placing them in order of preference to assess their understanding of language structures.

Set-up/Bridge-In/Stimulus: <input type="checkbox"/> How will you start on time, organised, students greeted with repeated individual eye contact?	Plans: I will come to the class on time, welcome my students and ask how they are feeling with repeated individual eye contact because the non-verbal communication has as much importance as verbal communication and it establishes the role of management in the classroom and it also increases a good rapport between the teacher and the student. I will arrange the chairs in orderly rows in pairs so it will be easier for students to do pair work.
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<p><input type="checkbox"/> How will you capture interest with outcome- specific grabber?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How will you provide visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic appeal via self and board?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How will you activate prior knowledge (schema)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How will you create a positive atmosphere?</p>	<p>Then, I will start to prepare my whiteboard by writing date, subject and the objectives of the lesson on the top left.</p> <p>I will ask students a warm-up question “How do we as Arabic speakers highlight the most important constituents in a sentence and deemphasise the others using preposed structures in our first language?”. I will also ask them to guess whether native speakers of English do the same in their language. I will ask them to discuss this question with their partners.</p> <p>I will use board and PowerPoint show for visual appeal. I will also use gestures and body language for kinaesthetic appeal.</p> <p>I will give students a small situation and ask them how they correct a particular information in this situation to activate their prior knowledge.</p> <p>I will create a positive atmosphere by giving praise to the student, e.g., saying good, well done, excellent, etc.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/> show how you will clarify points/answer questions with welcome and affirmation <input type="checkbox"/> textbooks, screen, realia, board, resources: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> ties content/skill to mode of assessment – integrity of outcome, methods, and evaluation is transparent	<p>I will give extra examples if needed to explain the questions with a smile on my face.</p> <p>I will use board, PowerPoint and worksheets as my resources.</p> <p>The knowledge sharing is tied to the outcomes of the lesson and the students are going to be evaluated on preposing in the IS test.</p>
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Learner Activities (Controlled Practice)

<input type="checkbox"/> logical practice of teaching point <input type="checkbox"/> includes clear instructions <input type="checkbox"/> requires/encourages participation	<p>Plans:</p> <p>I will show students a literary text (poem) on PowerPoint and ask them some questions. For example, how does the author highlight the most important constituents in the text and deemphasise the others? What syntactic structures does the author use?</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/> considers learning styles ¹⁰⁹ <input type="checkbox"/> activates both hemispheres ¹¹⁰ of the brain <input type="checkbox"/> relevant to level/adults/profession	<p>Using literary texts will help learners to identify IS since IS demands a natural context.</p> <p>I chose this activity because it will activate the left and the right hemispheres of their brain. This activity has all the facts for visual, aural and reading students and is relevant to their level.</p> <p>(see Appendix I, Part 1)</p>
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Learner Activities (Less-Controlled Practice)

<input type="checkbox"/> logical practice of teaching point <input type="checkbox"/> includes clear instructions <input type="checkbox"/> requires/encourages participation <input type="checkbox"/> considers learning styles <hr/>	<p>Plans:</p> <p>Students will be given some two or three written texts based on real situations similar to the real situations in the discourse completion tasks used in the pragmalinguistic tests (see Appendix H, Section A). They will be asked to imagine these situations and answer questions related to these situations. The real</p>
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¹⁰⁹ The different types of learners are visual learners, aural learners, Kinesthetic learners, reading learners and writing learners.

¹¹⁰ The left side of the brain controls the right side of the brain and it deals with logic, such as science and mathematics. Contrastingly, the right side coordinates the left hemisphere of the body and deals with arts and creativity. The left side develops through solving puzzles, reading and writing. The right brain develops through drawing, hearing and seeing. For mor information about the right and left hemispheres of the brain in teaching, see Sprenger, Marilee B. Wiring the Brain for Reading Brain-based Strategies for Teaching Literacy. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013. Web.

<input type="checkbox"/> activates both hemispheres of the brain <input type="checkbox"/> relevant to level/adults/profession	<p>situations and the related questions help learners produce preposing to achieve IS.</p> <p>I chose this activity because it will be a logical sequence to give students to write sentences related to real situations after explaining and modeling preposing to them.</p> <p>It will activate their right side of the brain (by imaging the real situations) and the left side (by writing about these situations).</p> <p>Reading learners and writing learners will enjoy this activity.</p>
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Learner Activities/Pair or Group Work (Free Practice)

<input type="checkbox"/> logical practice of teaching point <input type="checkbox"/> includes clear instructions <input type="checkbox"/> requires/encourages participation <input type="checkbox"/> considers learning style(s) <hr/>	<p>Plans:</p> <p>Each student will be asked to write about any situation happened in her life where someone misunderstood her and what did she say to correct or clarify the misunderstanding. Then, each student will tell what she has written to her friend. And her friend will also say how she would respond if she was in the same situation.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/> make equity in opportunity transparent <input type="checkbox"/> make students comfortable asking questions and giving opinions <input type="checkbox"/> manage classroom behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> manage unexpected comments, events calmly/empathetically	<p>I will do pair work so that each student will get the opportunity to participate in the class.</p> <p>I will give students questions before the lesson starts so that they will feel comfortable asking me those questions, and I will also encourage and reward students to ask me questions even if they are wrong.</p> <p>I will use non-verbal cues and keep students academically engaged to manage classroom behaviour.</p> <p>I will manage unexpected comments with patient.</p>
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Teaching/Learning Materials

<input type="checkbox"/> clear, neat, organized, professional, socio-culturally appropriate and attractive <input type="checkbox"/> useful learning instruments <input type="checkbox"/> give useful examples <input type="checkbox"/> uses authentic context	<p>Plans:</p> <p>I will use my own work which is socio-culturally appropriate and does not contain any cultural insensitive material, as I am very much familiar with the Arab culture.</p> <p>I will use authentic materials such as poems, so students will understand IS more easily.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/> is appropriate to level/ for adults	<p>I will connect the classroom activities with situations from students' real life which motivate them to use different syntactic constructions.</p> <p>I will give examples from students' real life to explain preposing structures and compare these structures in English with Arabic so the knowledge about English IS will be understood more easily and hence stable in their mind</p> <p>All the classroom activities will be appropriate to students' level. I will give clear instructions for each activity in the classroom and avoid using difficult words which may lead to their misunderstanding.</p>
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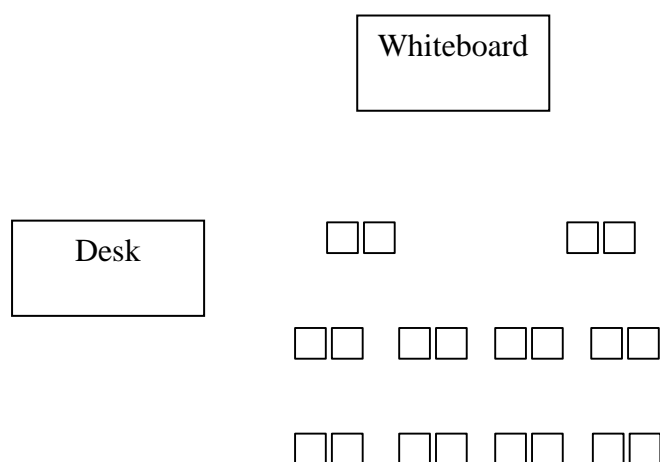
General Teaching Skills (explain how you will incorporate these features)

	Plans:
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<input type="checkbox"/> validation (praise, affirmation, elaboration, personalisation) is adequate	<p>I will relate the lesson with my own personal experiences and to my first language.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> use of the voice (clarity, speed, tone, volume) is effective	<p>I will use a clear, low-rise tone to attain likeability from the students.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> proxemics (movement, placement, blocking etc.), bearing, manners support the teaching	<p>I will arrange the seats of the students in orderly rows in pairs so that I will be able to reach every student because they like to see their teacher within reach but not too close to them, and I will also be able to move around the class easily. In this seating arrangement, students feel comfortable when interacting and participating with each other during a pair work.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> timing work well, balances periods quiet and noise/listening and talking over the class time	<p>I will give balanced talking and listening time over the class period.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Sample of teacher talk appropriate to level, for topic, for age etc.	<p>I will give a presentation for 10 minutes so that the teacher talk time will be appropriate.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> end on a forward-looking note, offer of additional help or resources	<p>At the end, I will have everyone take 30 seconds and ask them to tell me what they are taking away from the lesson and I will ask for a comment, a question and a compliment. I will give extra help to the students who need it and say that I am looking forward to meeting them the next day.</p>
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Class Set Up and Teacher Proxemics (please draw below this example)



This is how my class will look like.

Some Materials (journalistic writings) used during the teaching period:

It-clefts:

For most students at the University of Wisconsin, *football and men's basketball* are the top dogs when it comes to collegiate sports on campus. That's not the way it always was, however, because two decades ago, it was *Badger men's hockey* that reigned supreme at UW.

(*The Daily Cardinal* web edition, December 09, 2003)

The Capitol Square was filled with a wide variety of ethnic foods, but it was the diversity of people that brought many to the 19th annual Taste of Madison on Sunday.

(*Capital Times* web edition, September 2, 2003)

Liverpool's success is based on successful partnerships all over the pitch, but last night, when they were frustrated both in midfield and attack, it was the defenders who stood firm and proved the difference.

(*The Times* web edition)

By Friday night, according to the prominent Paris-based Romanian human rights activist, Mr Mihnea Berindei, the chain around the pastor's house was 200 strong. It was at this point that police initially peacefully and totally unsuccessfully, sought to persuade the protesters to disperse.

(BNC, AA4 91-92)

Most of all worth remembering is the trenchant declaration: “... no art, major or minor, can be governed by the rules of social amenity”. It was because Pound behaved always in the spirit of this remark that he could not fail to offend Englishmen of the type of Beerbohm and Bowra, and that he continues to offend their likes and their successors (in all social classes) at the present day, as, for instance, his confrere T.S. (BNC, A1B 1059)

Wh-clefts

Hotspur had felt some curiosity about this father of hers, for she was not a woman whose antecedents could easily be guessed at. What he saw was a man of about sixty years, older than he had expected, but still hale, and of a powerful frame. (BNC, HGG, 624–625)

And not only was it expensive to wash and refill the brown glass bottles, Reynolds said, but fewer and fewer of the cases were being returned for the deposit. [...] “What’s happened is that college kids were keeping the cases and using them for furniture,” said Reynolds.

(*Capital Times* web edition, November 21, 2003)

Rwh-clefts

Crash survivor Pam Warren, who founded the Paddington Survivors Group, today spoke of her hope that the inquiry report would give “closure” to survivors. “The report will officially recognize what happened on the day and that is what I mean by closure,” she told GMTV. (*The Guardian* web edition)

Susanna beams. “And now I feel it’s so nice to be free to try things. If you do a photo session and you look ridiculous, it’s just one day, you move on. I don’t feel I have to establish any one version of who I am, ‘cos I don’t know what that is, anyway.” A future Queen of Pop, ma’am, is who you are.

(BNC, CAD 2728)

Strach said the relief/celebrations/satisfaction was possibly better than winning the league – Scotland qualifying for the World Cup ... (and some other top sporting moments I’ve forgotten about!). He also said this kind of feeling is why he wants to stay in football as long as possible. (BNC, J1F 845)

If you get an obscene or abusive phone call, don’t say anything and hang up immediately! An emotional reaction is what the caller wants. If the calls continue, tell the operator and the police. (BNC, ARA 158)

As Tyson walked towards Lewis after both men had been introduced, a huge Lewis bodyguard reached out to restrain the former champion. Tyson aimed a punch which missed – perhaps intentionally – and all hell broke loose. “People did not realize what really happened,” says Emanuel. “Tyson was the one who lost control and was shouting and cursing at reporters afterwards.”

(*The Guardian* web edition)

Preposing:

It's difficult to do so, but we must get behind our team and manager unfortunately this is the team we all chose to support, and support them we must.

(Internet mailing list BLACKCATS, November 5, 2001)

Well, this term [Old Europe, MC] is now here to stay, and is well-used throughout policy discussions by parties other than America or Old or New Europe. You might not like its use, but used it is – by non-Americans and non-Old Euros alike.

(Internet discussion forum at <http://www.talkaboutusa.com>)

Some examples written on the board:

Preposing:

(1.1)

A: Do you think your sister would be more nervous in a job interview or job talk?

B: A job interview I think she would have somewhat more control over.

(1.2)

Brain you are born with. A great body you have.

(1.3)

I have three really best friends. Sami, Amr and Omar their names were.

(1.4)

A: Pizza and an orange juice, please.

B: Orange juice you ordered?

(1.5)

A: I wish Muhammad Bin Salman would run for President.

B: Muhammad Bin Salman you would vote for!?

Topicalisation:

(1.1)

A: Do you watch wrestling?

B: Yeah, football I like a lot better.

(1.2)

A: Where does your sibling go?

B: My brother he goes to Manchester and my sister she goes to London.

(1.3)

A: Who ate my soup?

B: I do know who ate your soup, but your chocolate Maria ate.

