

Variability in L2 Acquisition: Investigating the Role of Formal Features

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Abstract

Following the development of the minimalist program in the 1990's, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers' interest shifted from a focus on functional categories to a focus on formal features which, thereafter, came to be viewed as the 'center of learnability theory'. Subsequently, Chomsky's distinction of feature selection and feature assembly, divided SLA researchers among those who take L2 impairment to result from a failure in the selection of parametrized features, and those who believe that the problem is caused by a failure in feature assembly. The present study examines the validity of the feature (re)-assembly account by providing arguments from the second language acquisition of English by speakers of two varieties of Arabic. In particular, the findings from the comparison of the written samples of two groups of students are argued to support the claim that L2 impairment can be explained by a failure to (re)-assemble features. However, certain problems in L2 acquisition are left unaccounted for, suggesting that more is involved in SLA than just feature selection and feature assembly.

Keywords: Arabic (Bahraini/Tunisian), feature assembly, imperfective vs. present simple, SLA of English syntax

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Introduction

Generative second language acquisition (SLA) has gone through a number of stages in its development as a result of developments in linguistic theory and L1 acquisition. In the 90's, for example, following work in L1 acquisition (e.g. Radford, 1990, 1995), the interest, among generative SLA researchers, was in how learners, gradually, build phrase structure where evidence comes from the acquisition of the inflectional morphemes which point to the (non-) availability of particular functional categories (see, for example, Vainikka, 1993, 1994; Vainikka & Young-Sholten, 1994).

Other SLA researchers, following what is known as 'full competence' approaches in L1 acquisition, which argue for the availability of a full clausal phrase structure available from the earliest stages of language development (e.g. Borer & Rohrbacher, 1997; Lust, 1994; Wexler, 1998) were concerned with issues regarding the availability of functional categories in early stages of development (Eubank, 1993, 1994; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994, 1996).

Following the development of the minimalist program (MP) (Chomsky, 1993, 1995), SLA researchers' interest shifted from a focus on functional categories to a focus on formal features. Features became the center of learnability theory (See Beninca, 2001; Cinque, 1999; Rizzi, 1997, among others). Later, as a result of Chomsky's (2000, 2001, 2004) distinction of feature selection and feature assembly, SLA researchers became divided among those who believe that L2 impairment results from a failure in the selection of parametrized features (e.g. Hawkins & Liszka, 2003) and those who take L2 impairment to result from a feature assembly failure (Lardiere, 2005, 2008, 2009).

In this paper, using data from Arabic, the researcher argues that the feature assembly hypothesis is well supported but unable to account for all the facts of L2 acquisition.

Literature Review

Functional categories and features

The concept of a feature is not new in syntactic theory. In fact, Chomsky (1970) defines the syntactic categories N, V, P and A as combinations of the two features [-+N] and [-+V]. In Chomsky (1986), features are taken to project functional categories such as IP, DP or CP. In terms of language acquisition, this has led to the assumption that the acquisition of a particular inflection is linked to a corresponding functional category. For instance, tense, negation, agreement are assumed to constitute the category IP. Therefore, if the learner demonstrates learning of these inflections, this will be evidence for the learner having acquired the category IP.

In the later MP, more and more functional categories are assumed as features came to be distinguished from each other, and to each head its own projection (Cinque, 1999; Rizzi, 1997). SLA researchers have also used the concept of feature, as conceived in the Extended Standard theory, in their interlanguage descriptions (e.g. Flynn, 1983; Liceras, 1983; Mazurkevich, 1984; White, 1985). Following the introduction of the MP, syntactic formal features have come to be

viewed as the basic building units of linguistic structure: the ‘atoms’ of language (Adger, 2003; Baker, 2001). As a result, features have become, for many researchers, the “center of learnability theory” (Liceras, 2010, p. 250).

Parameters and features

Turning to the concept of a parameter, this was initially taken to be a set of options having the effect of constraining the range of syntactic variation arising between different languages. In SLA, this has come to imply that successful L2 acquisition would result from the learners’ success in ‘resetting’ parameters from the values of the L1 to those of the L2 (cf. e.g. Haegeman, 1988, p. 255). The significance of this idea is great as it provides the researcher with a means to deal with the problem of L1 interference.

As pointed out by Lardiere (2008) however, parameter setting is not well-suited to dealing with the problem of variability in L2 acquisition which seems to persist in spite of the learner having set a particular parameter.

This concept of a parameter has gone through a number of stages since its first inception: At first, it was argued that the set of parameters should ideally be small –for purposes of explanatory adequacy; later, that they should be associated with a cluster of deductive consequences; later still, that their number must not be restricted: Kayne (2005) for example, views all cross-linguistic syntactic differences as possible parameters. Subsequently, as the locus of cross-linguistic syntactic differences is found to be the morphological properties of functional categories –viewed as functional features- parameters have come to be associated with these features and parameter setting has become the selection and assembly of features into lexical items.

As a result, generative SLA has shifted its focus from whether the L2 learner has acquired the relevant functional categories to whether he has selected the appropriate features from the universal inventory of features (cf. Chomsky, 1998). Hawkins (2005, p. 124) provides an example of feature selection in SLA. Thus parametric variation has now become associated with the morphological properties of functional categories, which drive syntactic derivation (Chomsky, 1995, p. 222). For example, movement may occur in order for the feature of a particular morpheme (such as person, number, case...) to be checked.

Although the set of features is hypothesized to be universal, features are not activated or organized in the same way in all languages. In other words, what may cause problems for the L2 learner is the way they activate and organize the target language features and the way they use the features in conjunction with the operations of the computational system.

To conclude this section, parameters, functional categories and features are interrelated. For example, Liceras (2010, p. 250) argues that the EPP feature, located in the functional category CP, determines “the parametric option to which a given type of language belongs”, i.e. languages with fronting of wh-words, like English, or without, like Chinese. She also mentions the example of the minimalist analysis of the null subject parameter, by Alexiadou and

Anagnostopoulou (1998), which proposes that the feature [+D], located in TP, determines the parametric option between [+null] and [-null] subject languages.

Feature selection and feature assembly

For Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2004), there are two processes involved in language acquisition: feature selection and feature assembly. Feature selection selects the appropriate features (formal, phonological and semantic) necessary for the construction of the lexical items in the language: $[F_{L1}]$; feature assembly combines the features of $[F_{L1}]$ into particular lexical items: $[Lex_{L1}]$. Both these operations are triggered by exposure to the language in question. The significance of this is that parametric differences between languages will result from the particular features selected and from the way they are assembled.

The question which arises regarding SLA is what happens after the features of an L1 have been selected? Can the L2 learner still select features in the L2 that are not selected by his native language? Research in SLA has addressed these questions by investigating cross-linguistic differences caused by the selection of different features in the L1 and the L2 and the extent to which they lead to impairment (e.g. Hawkins, 2005; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Lardiere, 2006, 2009; Tsimpli, 2003).

One L2 approach which takes L2 impairment to result from a failure in the selection of parametrized features is the ‘representational deficit approach’ (Hawkins, 2001, 2003; Tsimpli, 2003). This approach argues that languages vary when they make different selections among formal features (Hawkins & Liszka, 2003, p. 25). In the context of SLA, features of the L2 that are not selected in the learner’s L1, are hypothesized to be unlearnable after the critical period.

Lardiere (2008) argues that this view of feature selection as parameter setting is “too simplistic” and that the problem of “acquirability” is instead the result of the “ways in which grammatical features are morphologically combined and conditioned”; i.e., assembled and “realized in each language, whether inflectionally or lexically, or even overtly realized or not” (p. 111). This view has been formalized in the so-called feature-assembly hypothesis (Lardiere, 2005, 2008, 2009) which takes the locus of persistent problems in L2 acquisition to be at the level of mapping of syntactic knowledge onto morphology and phonology (Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Prevost & White, 2000).

What this amounts to, is the observation that for the feature assembly hypothesis, the L2 grammar may be deviant even if knowledge of the target features is not impaired, suggesting that the source of the problems in L2 acquisition might lie somewhere else, namely, in feature assembly. This was recognized by Dominguez, Arche, & Myles (2011, The role of formal features in second language acquisition, para. 4): “acquiring the target $[Lex_{L2}]$ (and not $[F_{L2}]$) might be the source of attested problems in second language acquisition”. To acquire the L2, the learner must re-assemble the features of his L1 into new functional categories and their associated lexical items. Problems will arise when the L1 features do not “have the same

morpholexical expression in the L2” and learners cannot re-assemble them (Dominguez et al., 2011, The role of formal features in second language acquisition, para. 5).

Liceras (2010) provides two examples to illustrate this point, namely, Lardiere (2008, 2009) and Valenzuela (2008). For Lardiere, problems of plural marking with indefinite nouns by a Chinese learner of English result from the fact number and definiteness form a union in Chinese, whereas they are independent in English. This means that, in order for successful acquisition to take place, the two features must be ‘de-linked’ and re-assembled. Similarly, Valenzuela argues that, in order for English learners to acquire the Spanish CLLD (see below) construction, they have to identify the feature [+specific] and combine it with topicalization.

Some examples from Tunisian Arabic (TA) and English, illustrating the interrelationship between feature selection and feature assembly

Negation in English and TA

Consider the data in (1) and (2) below:

(1) a. He does not cook the meal

b. He is not sick

(2) a. ma y-tayyab-sh l-ftuur

TA

Neg 3MImp-cook-Neg the-meal

‘He doesn’t cook the meal’

b. ma hi-sh mriidh-a

Neg 3FSg- Neg sick-F

‘She’s not sick’

On the surface, the differences seem to be great. However, a few parameters are capable of easily accounting for the differences: Glossing over the role of the null subject parameter, and focusing only on the parameters related to negation, a few such parameters affecting formal features are able to account for the differences (analysis adapted from Hawkins, 2001):

(3) a. [IP He [I’ does_i [NegP not [Neg’ e [VP t_i [VP cook the meal]]]]]]

b. [IP He [I’ is_i [NegP not [Neg’ e [VP t_i sick]]]]

I is weak in English, but it can still attract auxiliaries and copulas –along with the empty Neg head- which move to I in steps, along the lines of the HMC (Travis, 1984). *Not* occupies the specifier position of NegP.

(4) a. [IP pro [I’ ma_j y-tayyab_i [NegP –sh [Neg’ t_j t_i [VP t_i l-ftuur]]]]

b. [IP [I’ ma_j hi_i [NegP –sh [Neg’ t_j t_i [VP t_i mriidha]]]]

TA strong I triggers movement of the main verb –along with the head Neg- to I. The head of Neg, in TA, is occupied by *ma*, whereas its specifier by *–sh*. In (b), *hi* is analysed as a copula.

Evidence for the main verb (like auxiliaries and copulas) raising to I in TA, comes from constructions like (5) where the Q particle is assumed to be located in C and hence, I to C movement would yield this structure:

(5) yiktib-shi ?

Write.3M-Q

‘Does he write?’

To recapitulate, a TA learner of English negation has to select the features [-+strong] and those associated with the Neg parameter, i.e. whether the head or/and the specifier of Neg is empty or filled. Now these features seem to be used in the same way in the two languages, and therefore, there is no clear evidence for feature re-assembly here.

Yes-no questions in English and TA

Consider the questions in (6) and their TA equivalents in (7):

(6) a. Have you sent the letter?

b. Have you sent it?

c. Have you sent it to him?

(7) a. b?ath-t- shi l-warqa ?

Sent-2Sg- Q the-paper

‘Have you sent the paper?’

b. b?ath-t-ha-shi

sent-2Sg-itF-Q

‘Have you sent it?’

c. b?ath-t-ha-l-uu-shi

sent-2Sg-itF-to-3M-Q

‘Have you sent it to him?’

In English, the EPP serves to move the auxiliary from I to C which must be [+null]. The TA data on the other hand, show that *-shi* first merges with C then the EPP triggers the movement and adjunction of the main verb to *-shi*:

(8) [CP Have_i [IP you [t_i [VP sent the letter]]]]

(9) [CP b?atht_i-shi [IP [VP t_i l-warqa]]]

In sum, a TA learner of English must discover that, contrary to TA, I may only move to an empty C position in English, which suggests that the parameters are assembled differently in the two languages.

A further complication arises when we consider the behavior of clitic object pronouns in the two languages (6b, c) and (7b, c). Contrary to English, clitic object pronouns in TA, must first attach to the host verb before the latter moving and adjoining to the Q particle:

(10) a. [CP [C' bʔatht-ha]_{ij} –shi [IP [I' t_{ij} [VP [V' t_i t_j]]]]]

b. [CP [C' bʔatht –ha –l-uu]_{ijk} –shi [IP t_{ijk} [VP [V' t_i t_j t_k]]]]]

The TA learner of English must, therefore, ‘de-link’ the features responsible for clitic placement and those responsible for question.

Restrictive relative clauses in English and TA

Consider the following data illustrating object relatives (11-12) and subject relatives (13-14):

(11) a. The book which I read was interesting

b. The book that I read was interesting

c. The book I read was interesting

(12) a. l-ktaab illi qriit-u baahi

The-book that read.Perf-it good

b. *l-ktaab qriit-u baahi

(13) a. The man who came is my friend

b. The man that came is my friend

c. *The man came is my friend

(14) a. r-raajil illi ja SaaHb-i

The-man that come.3Perf friend-my

b. *r-raajil ja SaaHb-i

The data suggest the following:

--Following a proposal by Rizzi (1990) (as cited in Hawkins, 2001, p. 157ff.), the feature [wh] is present in English in the form [-wh] but absent in languages with resumptive pronouns like TA.

--[wh] triggers the movement of the wh-element or the null operator (Op) to the specifier of CP; when [wh] is absent, a resumptive pronoun occupies the position from which a wh-element has moved in English (see, e.g. Shlonsky, 1992).

This is partially illustrated in (15) and (16) below, using the features [wh] and [pred] (predicate), the latter distinguishing relative clauses from other types of clauses (analysis suggested by Rizzi, 1990, p. 67) (cited in Hawkins, 2001, p. 157ff.):

- (15) a. [NP the book [CP which_i [+wh] [C' Ø [+wh,+pred] [IP I read [NP t_i.....]]]]]]]]
 b. [NP the book [CP Op_i [wh] [C' that [-wh,+pred] [IP I read [NP t_i.....]]]]]]]]
 c. [NP the book [CP Op_i [wh] [C' Ø [+wh,+pred] [IP I read [NP t_i.....]]]]]]]]
 (16) [NP l-ktaab [CP Ø [C' illi [Øwh,+pred] [IP qriit-u.....]]]]]]

Presumably, feature selection can account for all the facts above, namely, selecting [wh] and [[pred] would account for the movement of the wh-element or the null operator in English, together with the associated content of C; not selecting [wh], on the other hand, would account for (12a), but (12b) remains unexplained. This does not seem to be related to the presence/absence of [wh]. Learning English, therefore, would require re-assembling the features of TA which allow (12a) but not (12b) in different ways so as to allow (11a-c).

Similarly, as noted by Lardiere (2008) in connection with Chinese, the contrast between [wh] languages, like English, and non-wh languages, like TA, is not always straightforward as in TA (and Chinese) adjunct relatives, we, sometimes, observe locality effects, hence wh-movement. Without going into the details, observe the following contrasts to do with island violations:

- (17) a. *What_i do [IP you know [NP the author who [IP wrote t_i]]]
 b. *Why_i do [IP you know [NP the man who [IP quit his job t_i]]]

(Examples from Miyagawa, 2010)

Whereas all types of complex NPs with relative clause result in ungrammaticality in English (17), this is not the case in TA, suggesting as before, that movement is not involved:

- (18) a. haadha l-maktib illi na?rif r-raajil illi gra fii-h

This the-school that know.1SGPerf the-man that read.Imp in-it

(18b), however, shows that relativisation of adjuncts results in ungrammaticality, suggesting that movement has occurred:

- b. *fiin bish tkallim r-raajil illi Hatt l-ktaab ?

where Fut speak.Imp the-man that put.Perf the-book

As argued by Lardiere (2008) in connection with Chinese vs. English, “the differences between the two languages appear not to boil down to a single stark parametric choice”. Rather, “the properties of adjunct relatives in Chinese must be extended to all relatives in English”. “Once again, we see that it is the assembly and, for SLA, the re-assembly of features that must be acquired” (p. 128).

The same reasoning applies to TA.

Topicalization in English and TA

English, therefore, would require native speakers of BHA to ‘de-link’ the temporal/aspectual concepts in the L1 and map them onto new morphological elements in the L2. The data are taken from the written production of Bahraini students in the English department of the University of Bahrain, at two different levels of proficiency, and are meant to reflect the ability of the learners or absence of such an ability to re-assemble the features in the lexical items of the target language –English- and to give an idea about the remapping problem in SLA.

Some properties of the present tense and aspect in English and Arabic

The English present simple is commonly referred to as a tense that primarily expresses present time but that may also express certain aspectual distinctions. It can be used for example, to express habits and routines. The present continuous, on the other hand, is often used to express incomplete or ongoing events in the present.

Arabic -Assuming that all Arabic dialects share similar tense and aspectual distinctions- has only one form (the imperfective) for the two major interpretations of the English present, namely, the ‘event-in-progress’ and the ‘habitual/generic’ interpretations, as illustrated in (1) and (2). This fact will be claimed to lead to errors in the use of the English present simple. A similar claim was made by Liszka (2015, p. 80) in connection with French learners of English.

(1) a. yiktib ktaab kull yuum TA

b. yektib kitaab kil yawm BHA

write.3MSg Imp book every day

‘He writes a book every day’

(2) a. yiktib (fi) ktaab TA

b. yektib kitaab BHA

write.3MSgImp book

‘He is writing a book’

One reason the present simple does not have the ‘event-in-progress’ interpretation can be found in Liszka (2009, p. 235) who argues that “as English thematic verbs do not raise to T [or I], only the habitual/generic interpretation is available. Auxiliary *be*, however, does raise to T, giving rise to the existential/event in progress interpretation that maps onto the progressive form”.

In what follows, I will provide definitions of the imperfective aspect in Arabic as used by a number of researchers, all pointing to its dual interpretation:

-“The present (imperfect) is used for both continuous and habitual actions or states” (Wightwick & Gaatar, 2008, p. 17).

-“The present tense verb describes actions or events that are ongoing” (Abdulsattar, 2012, p. 23).

-“The imperfective form as argued by Benmamoun (2000) and Aoun et al. (2010) can be associated with different temporal interpretations” (cited in Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013, p. 147).

-“The present tense in Arabic functions to indicate the present progressive as well as the present simple” (cited in Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013, p. 148).

-“The imperfective (indicative) form occurs also in the context of sentences with present tense interpretations. ...[it has] progressive and habitual interpretations” (Benmamoun, 2000, p. 32).

In sum, the Arabic imperfective form seems to correspond to the interpretations of both the present simple and the present continuous in English.

English and BHA in contrast

Shamaa (1978, p. 32-33) explains the reason behind the difficulty encountered in translating Arabic tenses into English, as follows: "...[t]emporal contrasts in Arabic are less systematic, i.e., they are not clearly marked by verb forms...temporal reference in Arabic is expressed by means of verb forms in conjunction with time adverbials and other lexical items...".

Eisele (1990, p. 191, cited in Brustad, 2000) argues for an aspectual correspondence between the English simple tenses and the Arabic perfective and between the English compound forms and the Arabic imperfective. Building on this idea, in particular, the observation that the Arabic imperfective is rendered in English by means of a periphrase, and assuming L1 transfer in SLA, this contrast between English and Arabic is predicted to present a learning problem: Crucially, while Arabic uses the same form (imperfective) for both 'habitual/generic' and 'event-in-progress' interpretations, English uses different morphological forms for the different interpretations.

As pointed out by Dominguez et al. (2011, Spanish aspectual morphology, para. 3), "..... aspectual syntactic and semantic content is assumed to be the same across languages whereas its morphological expression is language-specific". What this implies is that each language will assemble the formal features associated with these aspectual distinctions into different morphological forms. Thus, the differences, as noted by Dominguez et al. (2011, Spanish aspectual morphology, para. 3) in how tense/aspect "are represented in [the] two languages need to take into account how the various meanings associated with the different features are mapped onto morphological forms in the two languages rather than merely whether the features themselves are selected in both languages".

Concretely, the researcher would like to propose that, as pointed out by Eisele (p. 191), the Arabic imperfective is usually rendered by English periphrases (in the absence of any contextual information). E.g.:

(3) yektib

Write.3MSgImp

'He is writing'

Both English and BHA possess the tense category and the [-past] feature. However, in BHA, this feature is closely linked with 'continuous' aspect. Therefore, in order to learn the English present simple, these two features (the feature associated with 'continuous' and the feature [-past] must be 'de-linked' and 're-assembled' for English. The researcher will argue

that, while this process of re-assembling is taking place on the way to ‘full’ competence, problems may occur, giving rise to errors such as (4a-c):

- (4) a. *He is leave
 b. *He is leaves
 c. *He leaving
 d. He leaves
 e. He is leaving

(a-c) show traces of the feature [continuous]. (a-c) will ultimately yield the correct forms (d) and (e). However, in this study, only (d), i.e., the present simple will be considered. Note that the verbal element in (4a-c) is a periphrase. Consequently, in the corpus of data, the author will be looking for such deviances which are indicative of feature re-assembly which is in the process of taking place.

Method

The rate of occurrence of such deviances in the written samples of two groups of Bahraini students will be compared, the idea being that, if the higher level of proficiency shows less deviances of the sort exemplified in (4a-c), this would support the claim that feature re-assembly is indeed taking place, provided the temporal/aspectual distinctions are similar for the two levels. In this study, a corpus consisting of students’ written production in the form of an essay assignment has been used. (Whether it would have been useful to supplement the data with elicited data remains a question for the future). Two groups of BHA students at different proficiency levels (namely, Eng111 and Eng1203) participated in this study. (See Appendix A for a description of the two levels). The number of students in each group is thirty (30), randomly selected from a total of 30 to 35 in each group. The sample can be considered a ‘convenience sample’ in the sense that the L2 students “are taken as a whole group” (cf. Loewen & Plonsky, 2016, p. 173):

Table 1 Participants

| | Age range | Number | Proficiency |
|---------|-----------|--------|--------------------|
| Eng111 | 18-20 | 30 | pre-intermediate |
| Eng1203 | 20-22 | 30 | upper intermediate |

The procedure consisted in asking the students to write an essay on a particular topic (see Appendix B). The same topic, intended to trigger the present tense, was assigned so that the assignments remain comparable in terms of aspectual distinctions.

Results

Table 2 summarizes mean number of errors observed in the task. For each group, the numbers are calculated on the basis of the total number of verbs with a habitual/generic

interpretation - where the present simple would be expected- and the number of deviances. A sample of error types is given in (5):

(5) “At the weekend, in Friday I going to my grandmother”

“After that we go a city center and shopping”

“I writing this letter”

“I usually swimming”

“The weekend is be a nice day”

“I am live in Manama”

“We often shopping and swimming”

“I am go to Manama”

Table 2 *Mean number of errors*

| | Mean No. of verbs with a habitual interpretation | Mean No. of incorrect suppliance |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|
| Engl111 | 13.3 | 4.6 |
| Engl203 | 16.1 | 3.63 |

Table 3: *Mean percentage of incorrect suppliance*

| | |
|---------|--------|
| Engl111 | 34.6 % |
| Engl203 | 22.5 % |

Discussion

Because of varying proficiency and other variables such as gender and age, results would have been more accurate had the percentages been calculated separately for each student instead of a whole group as here. Similarly, a longitudinal study would also have increased accuracy of results; notwithstanding, the data show that the mean percentage of deviations for Engl111 is noticeably superior to that for Engl203. What this may suggest is that feature re-assembly in L2 is closely tied to the variable of level of proficiency, indicating, in turn, that feature assembly and not just selection is involved in L2 acquisition.

Finally, reflecting on the deviances in (4a-c), it becomes clear that feature re-assembly alone cannot account for all the facts as the Arabic learner of the English present simple would still have to learn when to ‘de-link’ the two features and when not to ‘de-link’ them, resulting in either the present simple or the present continuous. This is so, because the Arabic imperfective, as shown above, is used for both the ‘habitual/generic’ interpretation (where the two features are ‘de-linked’) and the ‘event-in-progress’ interpretation (where they are linked). Similarly, correct productions such as *he leaves* does not necessarily mean that the learner is using them in the correct context, but may be the result of ‘overgeneralization’.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present author has tried to demonstrate, using data from Arabic learners of English, that L2 impairment can be explained by a failure to (re)-assemble features. However, as observed earlier, feature assembly, alone, is unable to account for all the facts of L2 acquisition.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Engl111 and Engl203 are part of three integrated courses designed for Arts students and English majors. The series of courses starts at pre-intermediate level in the first course and continues to upper intermediate in the last course. The courses offer instruction in grammar, vocabulary, use of English and pronunciation, with practice in listening, reading and writing. (information taken from the University course syllabus forms).

Appendix B

The essay topic:

You have the name and address of an English language student in another country. Write them a letter in which you

-introduce yourself

-describe your everyday routine

-Say what you like doing in your free time.

Write about 150-200 words