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7. University professors in the English departments should also be encouraged to participate in these courses and workshops.
8. At the end of each language workshop, participants must be examined to determine how far these workshops are helpful in achieving their objectives. This can be considered as a good feedback to help in the improvement of the workshops.
9. Teachers who pass the exam successfully should be awarded to go back to join their teaching, but those who fail should repeat the whole workshop. If they also fail for the second time, this means such teachers cannot benefit from the workshop; consequently fail to improve their linguistic competence, they should be given administrative jobs and they are replaced by qualified teachers.
10. Not only EFL teachers but the supervisors as well should to be given an annual language test (written and oral) at the beginning of each school year to evaluate their linguistic competence.
11. The EFL teachers should also be given computer courses to help them make good use of computer in improving and developing their linguistic competence.

## SUGGESTIONS

The Following are some suggestions for further studies that can address some of the issues related to the present study:

- 1- The role of CALL in improving and developing the four basic language skills.
- 2- An assessment of the linguistic needs of Saudi EFL student teachers.

to make any effort to improve and develop their linguistic level. This is because they as indicated in (Table 8) are frustrated by the negative attitude of their school management, students, and the society at large towards the English language.

Besides , the linguistically competent and well qualified teachers are financially treated on equal footing with those who are not even qualified and competent teachers .

10- Table (9) shows that the language skills the subjects of the study need to develop. 94% of the subjects need to speak English fluently. 73% need to understand the spoken English. 71% need to learn how to write English correctly. 86% need to learn how to translate the written texts from English into Arabic and vice versa correctly and spontaneously.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The linguistic competence of the graduates must be considered as a major criterion when appointing them as EFL teachers.
2. The Ministry of Education should introduce intensive in-service language courses and workshops to help EFL teachers overcome their linguistic problems. The duration of such courses are supposed to be a year or at least one semester keeping in view the level of linguistic competence of EFL teachers.
3. The EFL teachers who have language problems must be motivated to attend intensive language courses by giving them a leave as an incentive to help them benefit from these courses.
4. If any EFL teacher having language problems is not interested or is not willing to make any effort to develop her linguistic level , she should be forced to do so by various means.
5. EFL teachers should be given a yearly language test (written and oral) at the beginning of each school year to evaluate their linguistic competence. Those who have linguistic problems must be given a year or a semester language course depending on the results of the test.
6. The services of English native speakers should be made available to teach these courses.

test (Table 2), it is noticeable that there are more morphological and syntactic errors in the results of the objective test than in the results of the subjective test ; such as : the superlative and comparative form of adjectives(38%) , the passive and active forms of adjectives (34%), the passive (66%), the past and present perfect (45%), and gerund (42%). This is because in the subjective, the subjects test tried to use the strategy of avoidance, i.e. they avoided using certain grammatical items and syntactic structures wherein they have difficulties.

5-There is a great discrepancy in the results of the subjective test (Table 1) and the objective test (Table 2) on one hand ,and the results of the subjects' self evaluation (Table 3) on the other. In spite of many serious language problems that most of the subjects have, most of them disagree strongly with the statements which state that EFL teachers have difficulties in different levels of the English language. This is because they are not in a position to assess their linguistic competence in an objective way.

6- Table (4) indicates strong agreement of the subjects with the main reasons behind their linguistic problems , i.e. the English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are not used regularly in their daily life .English is used only when they teach the English textbooks in classroom. Moreover, Arabic is also used in the English language classroom.

7- Table (5) shows that (%77) of the subjects have not been given any in-service training course for improving and developing their level of English though their teaching experience ranges from five to twenty two years.

8- Table (6) indicates that all the training courses offered were held for developing teachers' level were only educationally and pedagogically oriented. No language courses were given to improve and develop their linguistic competence.

9- Table (7) shows that the subjects do not have any motivation or interest

(Table 9)

**English language skills to be develop**

NO	LANGUAGE SKILLS	SA	A	UC	D	SD
1	Speak English fluently	%73	%21	%1	%2	%3
2	Understand the spoken English	%40	%33	%1	%12	%14
3	Write English correctly	%45	%28	%1	%11	%15
4	Translate the written texts from English into Arabic and vice versa	%48	%38	%2	%7	%5
5	Translate correctly and spontaneously from English into Arabic and vice versa	%52	%33	%5	%7	%3

**8. MAIN FINDINGS**

The main findings of this paper can be summarized as follows:

1- According to Corder's classification of the errors stages , the subjects' linguistic competence belongs to the systematic stage in which they are not able to correct their errors but they can explain what they intend to convey in different words or structures.

2- According to the results of the identification and analysis of the subjective test (type one and type two errors), it is noticeable that the subjects do not have only language errors in sentence structures but also in the relationships between sentences and the combination of sentences into paragraphs.

3- As a result of the subjective test (Table 1), the subjects have serious language problems ; such as : morphological errors (89%), syntactic errors (65%), punctuation errors (96%), and spelling errors (62%)

4- Comparing the results of the subjective test (Table 1) with the objective

(Table 8)

**Reasons behind teachers' failure to improve  
and develop their competence in English**

NO	REASON	SA	A	UC	D	SD
1	The students' English level does not encourage me to develop my English	%47	%46	%1	%13	%9
2	No time	%50	%33	%2	%8	%7
3	Negative attitude of pupils towards English	%48	%37	%1	%5	%9
4	Not important for the job promotion	%48	%32	%1	%5	%14
5	No need to develop my English	%13	%18	%1	%37	%36
6	English is not important in my society	%18	%16	%1	%30	%35
7	No motivation towards developing my English	%9	8	%3	%34	%46
8	School management does not care about English	%23	22	%9	%25	%21

The sixth part asks about the English language skills which the subjects need to develop (see Table 9). (94%) of the subjects agree with the importance of developing their speaking skill.(73%) agree with the need to understand the spoken English well, (73%) agree that their writing skill needs to be developed, (86%) agree that they should be trained to translate the written texts from English into Arabic and vice versa.

The fifth part asks about the reasons which prevented the subjects from improving and developing their linguistic level (see Table 7). The answers show that they did not have any motivation or interest to make any effort to achieve that.

(Table 7)

**Teachers' ways in improving and developing their English**

NO	The WAY	A	D
1	Attending lectures in English	%10	%90
2	Reading books, references on English grammar, vocabulary, study skills, writing skills,...	%15	%86
3	Reading newspapers, and magazines in English	%37	%63
4	Reading poetry, plays, novels, short stories in English	%23	%77
5	Watching local and international news in English	%24	%76
6	Listening to local and international news in English	%43	%57
7	Using computers	%32	%68

The reasons behind their lack of motivation and interest are because they are frustrated by the negative attitude of their school management, students, and the society at large towards the English language. Besides, the linguistically competent and well qualified teachers are financially treated on equal footing with those who are not even qualified and competent teachers (see Table 8).



(Table 5)

## Training courses given to EFL teachers

NO	STATEMENT	NO	YES
1	Have you ever been given any inservice training language courses?	%77	%23

\* SA =strongly agree      A= agree      UC= uncertain      SD= strongly disagree      D= disagree

The fourth part asks about the kind of in-service training courses which were given to the subjects (see Table 6). The answers indicate that all the training courses were only educationally and pedagogically oriented.

(Table 6)

## Types of training courses given to EFL teachers

TYPES OF INSERVICE TRAINING COURSES GIVEN TO THE EFL TEACHERS	The Percentage of the EFL teachers who attended
1. A course in class management competence.	% 3
2. A course in methods of teaching.	% 3
3. A course in the use of educational aids.	% 2
4. A course in teaching reading skills.	% 3
5. A course in behavioral objectives.	% 5
6. A course in educational competence of the objectives of the English language.	% 8
7. A course in composition techniques.	% 7
8. A course on the types of exam questions.	% 7
9. A course in evaluation competence.	% 7

problems (see Table 4). Most of them agree strongly with the main reasons behind their linguistic problems , i.e. the English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are not used regularly in their daily life. English is used only when they teach the English textbooks in classroom. Moreover, Arabic is also used in the English language classroom.

(Table 4)

**Reasons behind teachers' linguistic difficulties**

NO	REASON	SA	A	UC	D	SD
1	Deficiency in the college education	%26	%30	%8	%15	%21
2	Reading the school textbooks only	%35	%38	%5	%12	%10
3	Not writing in English except what is related to the school textbooks	%36	%38	%1	%15	%10
4	Not speaking English in daily life	%37	%36	%1	%9	%17
5	English is only used in the classroom	%31	%36	%1	%13	%19
6	Using Arabic for explaining some words, terms and structures	%26	%36	%3	%15	%20
7	Not attending any lectures, or symposium on the English language	%45	%29	%4	%13	%9
8	Not attending any lectures, or symposium in English about other fields	%43	%31	%3	%10	%3

The third part asks whether the subjects have worked in improving and developing their English (see Table 5). (77%) of the subjects have not been given any in-service language training course though their teaching experience.

21	Tag question	% 3
22	Embedded sentence	% 53
23	Order of modifiers	% 21

### **THE QUESTIONNAIRE:**

The questionnaire consists of six parts. The first part asks about the difficulties the subjects face in using the English language skills. The results of the subjects' self evaluation (see Table 3) show that most of them disagree strongly with the statements which state that EFL teachers have difficulties in different levels of the English language.

(Table 3)

#### **Teachers' self evaluation of their linguistic difficulties**

NO	STATEMENT	*SA	A	UC	D	SD
1	Difficulty in listening comprehension	%24	%26	%3	%25	%22
2	Difficulty in speaking accurately and fluently	%14	%18	%3	%26	%38
3	Difficulty in reading comprehension	%16	%18	%3	%25	%38
4	Difficulty in translating from English into Arabic and vice versa	%10	%17	%6	%28	%39
5	Difficulty in pronunciation	%16	%19	%6	%20	%39
6	Difficulty in understanding Grammar and structures	%8	%9	%6	%12	%65
7	Difficulty in writing English correctly	%19	%18	%6	%19	%38

The second part asks about the reasons behind the subjects' linguistic

(Table 2)

## The results of the objective test

NO	LINGUISTIC ITEMS	Percentage
1	The superlative form of adjective	% 38
2	The infinitive form	% 8
3	An adjective in a passive form	% 31
4	Infinitive after modal	% 8
5	Gerund after the kind of verbs which require gerund	% 25
6	Gerund after the kind of verbs which require gerund	% 13
7	Gerund after certain grammatical structures	% 21
8	Past passive	% 62
9	Adjective in an active form	% 34
10	Passive in present tense form	% 43
11	Simple present tense	% 8
12	Past perfect tense	% 40
13	Present perfect tense	% 36
14	Past perfect tense	% 45
15	Passive after modal	% 66
16	Simple past tense	% 6
17	Simple present tense	% 17
18	Gerund after modal	% 42
19	Infinitive after modal	% 7
20	Simple present tense	% 8

In the *recognition* stage, taking the subject's sentence as an input data, a question is asked first "Is this sentence possible in the target language?" This is a question about the formal structure of a subject's sentence not about its appropriateness. This question asks whether this sentence is well-formed in terms of the rules of the grammar of the target language? If the answer to this question is negative, this means that the sentence contains at least one error. If the answer to this question is positive, there still remains the possibility that there is something idiosyncratic about the sentence but that idiosyncrasy is covert rather than overt.

In the *description* stage, the first step to describe an error is to ask, "Is the subject's sentence intelligible?" i.e. 'Can what he intended to mean be worked out?'

If what the subject's is trying to say can be understood, her sentence can be compared with that which would be produced by a native and, with such a comparison, her errors can be listed.

If, on the other hand, what the subject says cannot be understood, a reference to the subject's mother tongue (L1) is needed, since this may give a clue to her intention. Hence a question is asked, "Is the subject's L1 known? If the answer is positive, a contrastive analysis of a literal translation of the subject's L1, the target language equivalent and the subject's

actual sentence , assuming, that the literal translation is itself intelligible.

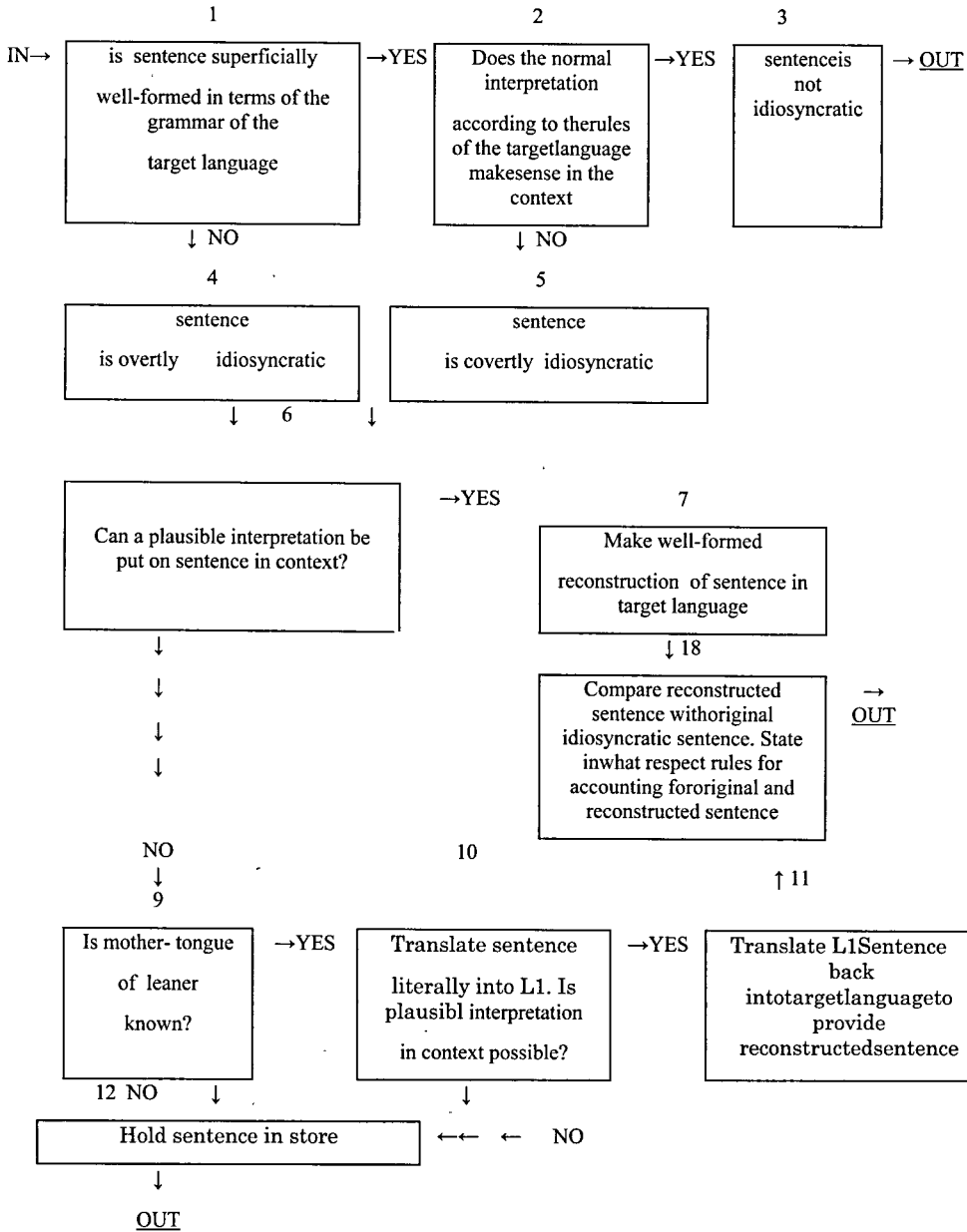
If the L1 is not known, or where the literal translation does not make sense, the nature of the error cannot be worked out.

## THE OBJECTIVE TEST

The objective test consists of 23 items. These items cover several grammatical items and structures such as infinitive, gerund, negative, tenses, passive, tag question, embedded clauses. In this test, the subjects were asked to deal with areas of language which they might avoid using in the subjective test.

Figure 1

Corder's modal in recognizing and describing



"idiosyncratic dialect "which is regular, systematic, and meaningful .In order to describe this dialect, he gives the following algorithm (see figure 1). The boxes are a number of sentences quoted from the data of this study and considered "idiosyncratic."

The following sentences are quoted as examples:

1. I think we should concentrate on the skills which I think elementary in learning any language I think.  
**In 1 - 4- 6 – 9 – 12 - out**
2. English should be taught in the elementary stage for different reasons. First of all pupils are too young to learn.  
**In 1 - 4- 6 – 9 – 12 - out**
3. Elementary schools are considered the fresh minds so students are eager to learn quickly.  
**In 1 – 4 - 6 – 9 – 10 – 12 – Out**
4. Children learn fast and ready to learn more.  
**In 1 – 4 - 6 – 7 – 8 – Out**
5. Teachers need hard work to make them understand.  
**In 1 – 4 - 6 – 7 – 8 – Out**
6. They must learn English in the elementary stage , how can they read and write.  
**In 1 – 4 - 6 – 7 – 8 – Out**
7. How to speak with it is in a good way.  
**In 1 – 4 - 6 – 7 – 8 – Out**
8. we are as Muslims need to learn English.  
**In 1 – 4 - 6 – 7 – 8 – Out**
9. It is the international language to communicate between nations.  
**In 1 – 4 - 6 – 7 – 8 – Out**
10. We face difficulties in teaching it late and the students also.  
**In 1- 4 - 6 – 9 – 10 – 11 – 8 - Out**

**Wrong tense of verb**

(it is applied in all schools already...,in other countries, the children are given two languages...)

**Disagreement between subject and verb**

( a sponge that absorb..., teaching English in the elementary stage give...)

**.Disagreement between verbs in a sentence**

(It will help students to develop their level learns..., some of the students refused to study English and asking ...)

**Confusion between active and passive**

( this may be made the native language weak ..., pupils must have taught that language correctly..., as it known ..., the teachers should be made the language familiar..., )

**Confusion between statements and interrogative sentences**

( they must learn how can they read and write..., our students should recognize how important is the English language..., )

**Wrong use of gerunds**

(teaching English in the elementary stage making them good...,I 'm looking forwards to see ..., )

**Using fragments instead of sentences**

( we face difficulties in teaching it late and the student also.,)

**Lack of the head noun in a noun phrase**

( teaching English in the elementary needs well-trained teachers..., )

**Word order**

( there should be mathematics lesson included...)

**TYPE TWO ERRORS**

In type two errors, Corder's modal (1971 p.156) (see figure 1) is adopted. He considers the linguistic competence of a foreign learner an



**Redundancy of the {-er cp}**

( It is better to start learning English when they are younger ..., learning English is easier when pupils are younger...,

**Confusion of parts of speech**

( they still can keep learning Arabic perfect...,in their day lif ,...)

**Plurality**

**Redundancy of plural**

(Secondly, Teaching English in the Elementary Schools..., Pupils have no Idiea about English...,)

**Lack of plural**

( english, saudi pupils, ...)

**Modifiers**

**Using double determiners**

(the our pupils level in English,...)

**Lack of possessive structure**

( the parents money which have been wasted ...,the teacher responsibility ...,)

**Vocabulary Errors**

Wrong choice of vocabulary (I agree to learn this language...,English should stand on the four skills...,)

**Syntactic Errors**

**Modal**

**Wrong form of verbs after modal**

(students can memorizes early..., they will became good...,)

**Verb**

**Lack of verb**

(I for teaching English in the elementary stage..., I must very intensive...,)

### **Lack of comma**

(If they learn it in the elementary schools they will become good., When I teach the first grade in the intermediate stage pupils have no Idia,...)

### **Morphological Errors**

#### **Articles**

##### **Redundancy of articles**

(they will help them get the language a step by step, there is a very big difference between...,...)

##### **Lack of articles**

(it is international language., it is excellent idea..., )

##### **Wrong choice of articles**

(A main reason is that...,an English language is important...,)

#### **Prepositions**

##### **Redundancy of prepositions**

(how to speak with it is a good way..., we can join between these two points of view...,)

##### **Lack of prepositions**

(it is very important teach this language ..., I agree teaching English ...,)

##### **Wrong choice of prepositions**

(the basics in the English language., teaching English from the elementary stage...,)

##### **Errors in the use of "most"**

( concentration on speaking skills is most important..., Arabic is most important for us...,)

##### **Errors in the use of "more"**

( to practice it more than freely and fluently..., their minds are fresh more than when they are old ..., )

(Table 2)

**Duskova 's procedure of classifying errors**

No	Types of Errors	Number of errors	Percentage
1	SPELLING	90	%62
2	PUNCTUATION	140	%96
3	MORPHOLOGY	130	%89
4	VOCABULARY	30	%21
5	SYNTAX	95	%65
Total		485	

The following errors are quoted from the data as examples:

**Spelling Errors**

"incurrage" (for encourage), "speack" ( for speak), "succuded" (for succeeded), "idiea" ( for idea), "difficult" ( for difficult), "forgien" ( for foreign),...

**Punctuation Errors****Redundancy of comma**

(I suggested also, that we can teach...,they will understand, when they become in the intermediate stage.,...)

**Redundancy of full stop**

(It will not effect on his religious instructions. from my experience in life ,I 'm with teaching English in the elementary schools. To make girls good in English,...)

and an objective test are utilized to collect data.

The tests were especially constructed for this study by the researcher.

Various errors spotted in both types of tests were established. It was assumed, prior, that such errors reflect the learners' linguistic competence at a particular stage.

### **VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF TESTS**

To determine the validity and reliability of these tests, Alpha method was applied .

The questionnaire was found reliable: .8188

The subjective test was found reliable: .8414

The objective test was found reliable: .3108

### **THE SUBJECTIVE TEST**

In the subjective test, the subjects were given a topic to write an essay. The subjects 'errors were divided into two major types. The first type represents those errors that occur within sentences, and the second type represents those that are related to the relationship between sentences and the combination of sentences into paragraphs.

### **TYPE – ONE - ERRORS**

In type one errors, Duskova 's procedure of classifying errors is as follows.( Duskova , (1969) pp.31-36):

(Table 1)  
Distribution of subjects

Variables		No.
Sex	Male	0
	Female	146
Nationality	Saudi	146
	Non-Saudi	0
Age	27- 32	106
	33- 45	45
Teaching experience	5 – 10	71
	11- 22	75
Qualification	BA Degree	146
	MA Degree	0
Place of graduation	King Saud University	39
	King Abdulaziz University	2
	King Faisal University	1
	Girls' University- College of education.	54
	Girls' University- College of Arts	50

### METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This study is undertaken within the framework of a linguistically-oriented surface structure error analysis. The focus is on the following linguistic levels: orthography, morphology, lexicology and syntax.

### METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

In this descriptive analytical study, a questionnaire, a subjective test,

- (f) Do the subjects have errors only in the structure of a sentence or do they also have errors in the relationships between sentences or the combination of sentences into paragraphs?

**2. Are the subjects able to assess their linguistic competence?**

Do the results of the subjects' self evaluation of their linguistic competence differ from the results of the tests of this study?

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:**

The subjects' linguistic competence is not up to the required standard:

- (a) The subjects have serious spelling errors
- (b) The subjects have serious morphological errors.
- (c) The subjects have serious vocabulary errors
- (d) The subjects have serious syntactic errors.
- (e) The subjects have serious punctuation errors.
- (f) The subjects have errors not only in the structure of a sentence but also in the relationships between sentences the combination of sentences into paragraphs.

The subjects are not able to assess their linguistic competence.

The results of the subjects' self evaluation of their linguistic competence differ from the results of the tests of this study.

**METHODOLOGY**

**SUBJECTS**

The subjects of this study are 101 high school and 45 intermediate school Saudi EFL teachers. Their main characteristics are shown according to a number of variables. These variables are sex, nationality, age, teaching experience, qualification, and place of graduation.(see table 1)

Muarik's study (1982), and kharma 's (1989) identified and analyzed the difficulties encountered by Saudi students at intermediate and secondary schools.

The only study which assessed the linguistic competence of EFL teachers was Mutawaa's (1997). It also made a comparison between the external and self evaluation of the linguistic competence of EFL Kuwaiti primary school teachers, but no research about the evaluation of the linguistic competence of EFL Saudi teachers has been conducted.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of this study stems from the following points:

1. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the subject of this study has not been studied in Saudi Arabia.
2. Studying the linguistic problems and needs of Saudi EFL teachers working in public intermediate and high schools would help in providing better incentives for training.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This paper has a two-fold aim: first, to determine the Saudi intermediate and high schools EFL teachers' linguistic competence. Second, to study their linguistic problems and needs.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS:**

The study aims at answering the main following questions and their corollary questions:

#### **1. What is the level of the subjects' linguistic competence:**

- (a) Do the subjects have spelling errors?
- (b) Do the subjects have morphological errors?
- (c) Do the subjects have vocabulary errors?
- (d) Do the subjects have syntactic errors?
- (e) Do the subjects have punctuation errors?

At a systematic stage, a learner becomes more consistent in his patterning, and to exhibit rather consistent errors indicating internalization of rules. However, at this stage, the learner is not able to correct his errors but he can explain them in the sense of providing, in different wording or structures, alternative linguistic messages that get his point across and let the hearer know what he intends. That is, upon making an error and receiving some negative feedback, a learner can recognize where his error is and make another attempt to communicate his ideas.

At a postsystematic stage, a learner is quite consistent in his speech; when he makes an error, he is able to explain it and correct it as well.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The phenomenon of having linguistically unqualified teachers is attributed to the following two factors: Firstly, the Ministry of Education appoints graduates as EFL teachers on the basis of holding a university or college degree in English without giving them language tests for evaluating their linguistic competence. Secondly, the shortage of EFL teachers in some schools sometimes forces the Ministry of Education to appoint graduates whose proficiency in English is far from satisfactory.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Several studies pointed out the problems that Saudi learners encounter when learning EFL. Some of the works were done following the contrastive analysis formula (CA); others within a traditional formula of error analysis (EA).

Sayed's study (1982) and Gublan's (1992) aimed at identifying, classifying, and analyzing the written errors made by Saudi Freshmen students within the framework of EA and CA.

Sharma's study (1981) was an analysis of the written performance of Saudi students studying English as a second language (ESL) at Indiana University. He attributed most of the students' written errors to universal processes of simplification and generalization.



When the standard of pupils in the FL is less than expected, the blame is usually attributed to teachers' deficiencies. Teachers are presumed to be competent and well-trained with good command of the standard basic language skills. Thus their inability to meet the required standard leads to poor teaching. In addition to creating feelings of frustration among pupils, incompetent teachers cultivate incorrect linguistic patterns in their minds that are difficult to correct at subsequent stages.

A number of terms has been coined to describe the perspective of learners' second language systems. The best known of these terms is interlanguage ( Selinker 1972) referring to the separateness of a second language learners' system, a system that maintains intermediate status between the native and target language. Nemser (1971) referred to the same general phenomenon in second language learning but stressed upon the successive approximation to the target in his term approximative systems. Corder (1971) used the term idiosyncratic dialect to connote the idea that the learners' language is unique to a particular individual, that the rules of the learner' language are peculiar to the language of that individual alone.

Corder (1971) provided a model for identifying idiosyncratic utterances in a second language (see figure 1). That model is schematized : a major distinction is made between overt and covert errors. Overtly erroneous utterances are those that are unquestionably ungrammatical; covertly erroneous utterances are grammatically well formed but not interpretable within the normal context of communication.

On the other hand, errors can be described as errors of addition , omission , substitution, and ordering. Within each category, the levels of a language can be considered in terms of phonology or orthography, lexical, syntax ,and discourse.

According to Corder 's model the systematicity of errors is classified into three stages: a presystematic stage, a systematic stage, and a postsystematic stage.

A presystematic stage is the one where a learner becomes vaguely aware that there is some systematic order to a particular class of items. At this stage, the learner is unable to correct his errors or to explain them –that is to paraphrase them or to get his point in another way.

*Evaluation of Saudi Intermediate and High Schools EFL Teachers'  
Linguistic Competence*

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**ABSTRACT**

English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi public schools (intermediate and high schools) is subject to change to cope with the requirements of the age of globalization. Therefore, curricula are to be modified and developed. EFL teachers should be involved in such development so that they can understand, implement, and adjust to these new curricula; consequently, they can help the pupils use EFL correctly and efficiently .This paper has a two-fold aim: first, to evaluate the EFL teachers' linguistic competence in Saudi public schools (intermediate and high schools) in Riyadh. Second, to study their linguistic needs for helping in provision of better incentives for training. The subjects of this study are 101 EFL Saudi high school teachers and 45 EFL Saudi intermediate school teachers. It is a descriptive analytical study utilizing a questionnaire, a subjective test and an objective test to collect the data. The study is undertaken within the framework of a linguistically- oriented surface structure error analysis. The focus is on the following linguistic levels: orthography, morphology, lexicology and syntax. The study concludes with a set of recommendations related to the findings.

**INTRODUCTION**

There is a general agreement among educationists that a foreign language (FL) teacher is an important factor in the educational process, provided that s/he is chosen according to certain criteria and competency in FL teaching. Linguistic competence is a crucial element in the success of instruction in FL programs (Mutawa, 1997). Thus, a teacher who faces difficulty in using the FL correctly will neither succeed in transmitting good command of the language nor be able to teach it effectively.

