FOSSILIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF AN ADULT LEARNER

by

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JUNE 2007
DECLARATION

Student number: 0738-190-5

I declare that FOSSILIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF AN ADULT LEARNER is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature date
(Ms V D de Wit)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my sincere gratitude to the subject of this study for his kind cooperation, and wish him the best for his future language learning. I acknowledge my indebtedness for the completion of this dissertation to my supervisor, Mrs Ruth Scheepers, and to the unwavering support of my two children.
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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DISSERTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>additional language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESLA</td>
<td>English second language acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>interlanguage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>first language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>second language acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>target language</td>
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## ARABIC TERMS WHICH APPEAR IN THIS DISSERTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eid</td>
<td>day of celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>galas</td>
<td>enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hal toreed</td>
<td>do you want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haram</td>
<td>unethical, sinful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalila wa Dimna</td>
<td>Kalila and Dimna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mabrouk</td>
<td>congratulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malik</td>
<td>king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nam</td>
<td>good, okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oud</td>
<td>Arabian guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharia</td>
<td>Islamic law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheesha pipe</td>
<td>tall water-pipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheilah</td>
<td>face veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wen</td>
<td>where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya kareem</td>
<td>expression of resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zarzur</td>
<td>species of bird</td>
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Fossilization: A Case Study of an Adult Learner

Summary

Linguistic fossilization is a prevalent phenomenon in adult ESLA and presents a perpetual pedagogical challenge to teachers. Despite controversy about the theoretical concept, research is increasingly showing that persistent erroneousness cannot be attributed to single causal factors. This single case study examines controversial aspects surrounding the concept and formulates criteria for identifying fossilization. The study investigates the conversational output of an independent adult learner over a period of nine months and presents a holistic exploration of causal influences. The findings substantiate that fossilization arises from changing combinations of factors, and that such combinations are unique to the situation of each adult learner. The key to the successful treatment of fossilized errors may lie in identifying their roots, which can be achieved by analyzing output and through discussion with learners in order to gain insight into their experience of the learning process. Results also suggest that a critical perspective on the theoretical construct is needed in order to investigate the phenomenon in adult second language acquisition.

Key words

Fossilization, persistent errors, interlanguage, lingua franca, compensatory communicative strategies, first language influence, input, instruction, intelligibility, learning materials, multiple effects principle, naturalistic acquisition, pidginization, psychological factors, qualitative research, socio-cultural factors.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the study. The research questions are stated and the background to the empirical investigation is provided, after which the aims of the research are explained. The rationale for the research design and methodology is given, and the remainder of the dissertation is briefly outlined.

1.2. Research questions

This study explores the following three issues:

1. the identification of fossilization in a learner's second language;
2. the identification of the roots and causes of this phenomenon;
3. the relevance of the findings in an individual case to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in general.

The study area was limited to acquisition of English as a second language by an adult in an independent learning situation, and to one learner in particular.

As the extreme form of faulty acquisition, fossilization is relevant to all domains of additional language learning and teaching, since the main aims of second language acquisition are correct internalization of new material and successful outcomes in communication. Failure is characterized by faulty internalization and consequent unsuccessful outcomes. Therefore all second language acquisition research is concerned with the correctness-incorrectness dichotomy and its roots and causes (Nakuma 1998: 247), but in the case of fossilization, when a serious block to any further progress manifests itself, extreme failure becomes the specific focus of theoretical and empirical enquiry. The exact nature and causes of fossilization have eluded researchers so far (Nakuma 1998: 248), and the question remains: why do random selections of linguistic structures become fossilized in random selections of language learners?

In 1985 Patsy Lightbown summarized what second language acquisition research had established about fossilization at that point as follows: development may cease because the learner deems his/ her communicative competence adequate, and/or the learner may feel adequately integrated into the target language community; fossilizable items are thought to be those which involve a three-way convergence of universal, native- and target-language rules or patterns; and further
instruction has no effect on fossilization. She conceded that the reasons for fossilization are ‘very difficult to determine with any certainty’ and that the matter of differentially fossilized outcomes is ‘largely unresolved’ (Lightbown 1985: 179).

In 1994 Theresa Pica answered the frequently asked classroom question of what can be done about fossilized learning by providing a range of different perspectives and findings as to the causes. She listed the following major causes: limited interaction with the target culture, overemphasis on communicative fluency, neural and maturational constraints, lack of noticing deviance from target standards, lack of ability to progress, the degree of difficulty of the target language feature being learned, and wrongly transferred socio-cultural appropriacies. She concluded that ‘there is a need for informed development of instructional materials and procedures for fossilized learners and for ongoing research on the impact of such instruction’ (Pica 1994: 75).

In a 2000 anniversary article Lightbown revisited the issue of fossilization (describing it as ‘acquisition [which] stops ... before the learner has achieved native-like mastery of the target language’, rather than using the term fossilization). She pronounced the Critical Period Hypothesis (neuro-cognitive age constraints according to which adult learners are preconditioned to fossilize) to be ‘questionable’ as a main contributor, conceding that the research ‘is not without controversy’, and found that the most important factor in unsuccessful acquisition is not age, but the intensity of the instruction and the continuation of exposure over a sufficient period of time (Lightbown 2000: 448-449).

These three summaries testify to the ongoing uncertainty among Applied Linguists about the nature, causes and treatment of linguistic fossilization in spite of the plethora of factors which researchers have put forward to explain this phenomenon.

As will be shown in chapter 2, the concept of and approaches to fossilization have undergone some refining: there is now greater circumspection when applying the term to observable learning outcomes, especially in differentiating between temporary and permanent faultiness; and the phenomenon is now thought to be the result of a much more complex confluence of variables. This points to the need for investigating fossilization either more holistically, or limiting the significance of a study’s findings to only those aspects that were investigated in the study.
1.3. What is fossilization?

An in-depth discussion of the varying definitions, perspectives and opinions which have formed an integral part of the history of fossilization since Larry Selinker coined the term in 1972 will be incorporated in the literature review (Chapter 2). Briefly, fossilization in SLA manifests itself as persistent erroneous forms and usages of the target language which are strongly resistant to change. In the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 211) the term is defined as follows:

(in second or foreign language learning) a process which sometimes occurs in which incorrect linguistic features become a permanent part of the way a person speaks or writes a language. Aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammar may become fixed or fossilized in second or foreign language learning. Fossilized features of pronunciation contribute to a person’s foreign accent. Some researchers are sceptical of the existence of true fossilization, which implies the impossibility of future change, and prefer the term stabilization instead.

As can be seen here, the degree of scepticism about fossilization – especially because of the inherent negativity of the term – is such that it merits mention in an Applied Linguistics dictionary definition. The following (Bierbaumer 1997: 4) is typical of the protest:

I cannot see a single learning situation where a term implying the inevitability of a negative process or state would be helpful. Since fossilization is synonymous with petrification, some ‘fossilized’ learners might see themselves in the same hopeless situation as Lot’s wife.

Another major criticism of definitions of fossilization is that they lack sophistication, which leaves room for interpretation and makes the phenomenon non-measurable (Han 2003: 99). Diverse perspectives and philosophical speculations arising over the decades have further clouded the issue; idiosyncratic perspectives prevail, and there is little consensus on which methodologies are most appropriate for investigating the phenomenon (Fidler 2006: 409).

Most teachers have their own ‘kitchen definitions’ of the phenomenon, as this learning behaviour is a prevalent problematic aspect of adult language learning. In a brief oral survey conducted by the researcher (see Appendix A), ten ESL teachers in Abu Dhabi (all native English speakers from the US, UK or Canada, each with more than ten years’ ESL experience of teaching adults) were asked what they thought the term linguistic fossilization in second language learning referred to.
Their responses revealed that the term is not widely known amongst practitioners, and in some cases it was confused with the phenomenon of historic remnants of older languages or early influences on the formation of a language. However, once the term was clarified to them, all respondents showed immediate recognition of the phenomenon and varying degrees of amusement at the term.

This researcher first encountered the term in 2005 in H.D. Brown's *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (2000: 231), described there as 'the relatively permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms' which 'shouldn't be seen as a terminal illness, in spite of the forbidding metaphor...'. The term had an instant metaphoric appeal and immediately resonated with personal observation during fifteen years of teaching English as a first, second and foreign language to adolescents and adults that incorrect forms become mysteriously entrenched and in some cases impossible to dislodge from the output of many learners. However, in perusing academic pronouncements on fossilization, it soon became clear that it is a controversial issue in the SLA field.

1.4. **Context of the research problem**

One cannot deny, as Lardiere reminds us (2006: 239), that many if not most adult second language learners 'fail' (if success is defined as acquiring native-like competence and performance in all aspects of the target language). An adequate explanation for this is a long-term goal in SLA research and will contribute to a better understanding of human cognition in general.

All aspects and manifestations of non-learning and error in SLA are relevant to the issue of extreme acquisition failure. Relatively few research studies have focused on fossilization *per se*; many conclusions about the phenomenon have been drawn from research purporting to be investigations of fossilization, but which in reality have focused on less radical aspects of second language acquisition (Han 2004a: 26). Most research findings dealing with the specific nature and causes of fossilization perused in preparation for this study have been criticized elsewhere by applied linguists for various shortcomings and inadequacies: they were based on sketchy data samplings or inadequate observation periods, they blurred the line between temporary non-development and total cessation of further learning in their empirical focus, or they sought to extrapolate their findings inappropriately.
However, Han is of the opinion that each idiosyncratic application of the term adds a new empirical property to the construct and that each explanatory account reveals a different underlying factor or aspect of such factors; but she admits that these many explanations have not strengthened the predictive power of the concept (Han 2004a: 107). The usefulness of the construct in the SLA field has therefore been questioned. Current consensus is that the phenomenon is the result of a combination of variables affecting the learning process in each individual case; thus, the focus of research concerning the nature of fossilization should be on how these variables converge and influence linguistic outcomes.

Ironically, as the concept seems to have spread itself out too broadly, some applied linguists find it in essence too narrow. Donna Lardiere was asked to guest-edit a 2006 thematic issue of *Second Language Research*; the editors suggested the theme of fossilization, but she writes that the term, with its underlying focus on ultimate failure, eventually ‘came to feel too limiting’. She preferred to use the construct ‘ultimate attainment’ because it is more neutral in its avoidance of ‘notions of dubious theoretical value such as success and failure’ and ‘more accurate’ (Lardiere 2006: 239).

### 1.4.1. The multiple effects principle

Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992: 198) introduced the multiple effects principle in 1992 to explain fossilization. According to its main hypothesis, fossilization occurs as the result of a cluster effect of co-factors, of which first language transfer seems to be the axis:

... multiple factors dominated by language transfer not only stabilize but may ultimately fossilize an interlanguage. In addition, interlanguage forms that stabilize as a result of transfer-dominated multiple effects may be impermeable to any external influences including pedagogic intervention.

Larsen-Freeman (1997) has suggested a chaos-theory interpretation of language acquisition, which would view the phenomenon as a very complex and dynamic convergence of variables in each individual learner’s case: ‘Complex systems often ... comprise a large number of components or agents.’ (p 143). She proposes this view because in her opinion current popular models of grammar do not capture the dynamism and variability – ‘infinite variations of a finite grammar’ (p 150) – of language use very well, therefore a more dynamic model of grammar is desirable (p 147). A central question in science is how order arises out of a chaotic-seeming complexity (p 144); transposing this onto SLA, Larsen-Freeman suggests exploring how the adult
learner manages to achieve systematicity in his/her interlanguage in spite of misunderstanding, error and deviance. She claims that language is 'no different from other natural phenomena in that its form follows function' (p 150).

This would, however, make the researching of hypotheses very difficult, since chaos theory assumes endless combinations and recombinations of many variables, and she admits that '... we will never be able to identify, let alone measure, all of the factors accurately.' (p 157). Seen from this point of view, systems are unstable in that small 'triggers' may also have far-reaching consequences; tiny differences in input may give rise to 'overwhelming differences in output' (p 144). Research which aims to establish as realistic a picture as possible of the acquisition process should nonetheless endeavour to identify as many contributors and 'triggers' as can be found to exist, but what is of cardinal importance is how these factors interact with one another in the process of acquisition, and what exactly causes change in the interlanguage system. Logically, the same would apply to a description and analysis of fossilization. In Lardiere's opinion, the value of a chaos theory approach in SLA is its resistance to 'the temptation to settle for simple solutions to complex problems' (p 158).

1.4.2. Causes of fossilization

In this researcher's experience of adolescent and adult learners, sympathetic proddings as to why certain language skills, when assessed after instruction, had not been mastered, have always elicited a variety of reasons and excuses: I didn't understand, I left my book in the classroom, I had no time to prepare, I was angry with my friends, it's that time of the month, I listen but I don't remember, I freeze up when I see a reading piece, some questions didn't make any sense, my parents are getting divorced, I'm not good at English, we had a crisis at work, I'm kind of depressed these days, I was so tired, there wasn't enough time, and so on. Such responses suffice to show that the reasons for failed outcomes at a given point in time may be many, may vary from person to person, may vary within the same person from time to time, and may combine randomly.

In her taxonomy of the 'putative' causes of fossilization gleaned from research and theory, Han groups fifty factors under the headings of internal and external (2004a: 29). Surprisingly, motivation is not mentioned; however, since only nine external factors are listed, her taxonomy shows that the internal – cognitive, neuro-biological and socio-affective – factors of language acquisition far outweigh the external contributors. MacIntyre (1995: 96) believes that the language learner is unlikely to persist in his/her learning endeavours without a positive
contribution from the constellation of affective factors. However, motivation is very difficult to measure as an isolated construct. Brown points out the three main problems in empirically proving the role of affective factors such as motivation: self-rating procedures may be invalid because of inaccurate self-perception; respondents may choose responses which they feel will show them in a better light; and affective phenomena are not interpreted in the same way by all cultures or societies (Brown 2000: 167-168).

1.4.3. The target language

Most classic definitions of fossilization refer in one way or another to native-like target norms: lack of native speaker ability, cessation of learning before native-speaker competence has been achieved, nonnative-like outcomes, and so on. This dimension of the definition has been attacked over the years on various grounds. If adult second language learning outcomes are compared with first language outcomes (children having been, after all, exposed since birth to the first language, and schooled and skilled in it in educational institutions for a decade or more), the former will invariably be found inferior in some way to the latter; nonnative therefore implies underachievement. Is it appropriate to equate the learning of an additional language – a difficult and demanding task with which adult monolinguals do not always have empathy – with non-nativeness, ergo failure? According to Nickel (1998: 9), one of the rights of the second-language learner is the right to make errors, and he goes on to ask the following question (10):

The world, our countries, our communities will survive with faulty pronunciation
and less than perfect grammar, but can we be sure they will continue to
survive without real communication?

The conundrum is further compounded by the enormous range of accents, dialects, registers, styles, 'World Englishes' and so on within English. Many education-related job advertisements in UAE newspapers, for example, contain the phrase 'native UK or US English speakers only'. By which native standard, then, should the utterances of the adult second language acquirer be judged as successful, failed, or 'fossilized'? Calls for re-examining the target language standard against which SLA achievement is to be measured are part of the current deconstruction of fossilization, and part of the general trend to redefine failure in more politically correct terms in SLA.
1.4.4. Socio-cultural considerations

Many SLA theorists increasingly view the meaning of linguistic utterances as determined by social reality and context as much as by inherent linguistic properties (Kramsch 2002: 11). Moyer (2004: 43) points out that for authors such as Lantolf, Norton Pierce, Tahooyeh, and Pavierko notions such as context, community, and the individual learner’s communicative and social intentions are key to understanding how competence in second language develops. A second language is ontologically defined by the existence of a first language, which brings into the equation not only two languages, but also the cultures, countries or communities to which each is indigenous and which have shaped the way the language commonly functions amongst its users today. Aspects of first language transfer, insufficient acculturation, and input from native and other speakers in the milieu have been posited as dominant causal contributors to failed language-learning outcomes.

1.4.5. Communicative competence

Whereas an error is of academic interest in the learning environment, it may have disastrous consequences in the social environment. What exactly a learner means when he/she says something, and what the recipient understands by it, is not always as simple as the mere lexical meaning of the words and their semantic logic; where, why, how, to whom, with which affective attitude, and when the utterance is made may all alter the meaning of an utterance in profound ways. An excellently articulated utterance may, for example, cause resentment if it constitutes an interruption of another speaker. The concept of linguistic competence has been broadened to include dimensions of communicative competence in addition to grammatical properties of correct language usage. Many theoretical models have been proposed to capture the phenomenon of communicative competence; one of the better known is Canale and Swain’s 1980 model, which divided the construct into four subcategories: grammatical, discoursal, sociolinguistic and strategic competence (Brown 2000: 247). In 1990 Bachman proposed that ‘language competence’ should be seen as consisting of grammatical and textual competence (‘organizational competence’), and illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence (‘pragmatic competence’) (cited in Brown 2000: 249).

Investigations of fossilization increasingly encompass the communicative aspects of language in addition to linguistic competence; because in spite of fossilized linguistic peculiarities, an adult second language (SL) user may communicate or function quite successfully in the second language; or the learner may fail in communicative situations in spite of linguistic correctness.
Errors which do not impede intelligibility are known as local errors, whereas errors which result in unintelligibility and thereby impede communication are known as global errors. In discussing the issue of global versus local fossilization, Han (2004a: 21, 22) points out that labelling a learner, or a learner’s competence, as ‘fossilized’ is conceptually flawed, since such a judgement is reached by examining observable output which may not be a true reflection of competence; evidence of global fossilization is impressionistic rather than empirically established. The bulk of fossilization research so far has pointed to local fossilization, showing that very often, certain errors become entrenched while other aspects of the learner’s linguistic competence continue to develop positively.

1.5. Aims of the study

This study was informed by the abovementioned aspects of fossilization theory and research, which will be discussed in more detail in the review of relevant literature (Chapter 2). The following three aims were central to this empirical investigation:

- the identification of fossilization in an L2 learner’s language;
- the identification of the roots and causes of the phenomenon and their interaction;
- the establishment of the relevance of findings in an individual case to SLA in general.

1.6. Methodology

The choice of methodology was based on whether it could incorporate the following objectives in the enquiry process:

- to distinguish between fossilization and lesser errors in an L2 learner’s output;
- to determine the cause(s) of fossilization by identifying as many contributory variables as possible;
- to gain insight into the impact of identified variables on the L2 acquisition process.

One monologue and eight conversations with a single subject were recorded over a period spanning nine months. Transcripts of these conversations provided the bulk of the data used in the linguistic enquiry. Two lengthy unrecorded conversations prior to the period of recordings,
the recorded conversations themselves, an exploration of the socio-linguistic milieu of the subject, and field notes on observation of the subject in social settings provided additional data on the learner’s background, his attitudes and motives, his language learning experiences in general, and his current learning situation.

1.6.1. The single case study

An empirical investigation of a single subject was decided on for the purposes of this research. As Nunan (1992: 89) observes, the teacher can learn a great deal about his/her own students through a detailed study of one particular student because of the depth of insight which can be gained by this method. This researcher is currently teaching English as a second language to a total of 103 adult male Emerati learners; their class time is limited to four hours per week per class group, and due to the full programme which they follow at a government institution there have not been opportunities to explore the causes and reasons underlying common persistently faulty linguistic outcomes. By investigating the case of an Arab adult learner learning the same L2 in the same milieu, it was hoped that a deeper understanding of fossilization might be reached, which could contribute positively to teaching methods and procedures.

The objection has been raised that since a case study of a single individual treats so small a sample, it presents difficulties in maintaining falsifiable criteria and in the generalizing of its findings, and does therefore not make a truly meaningful contribution to the academic field (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995: 318). Donmoyer (1990: 183) counters this by stating that in a field such as education, in which there is a concern with the individual and not just with aggregates, all research findings are tentative. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 317) are of the opinion that the single case study has great value because it can contribute a fuller account of the influences which impact on human behaviour, and can be used to test existing theory or practice in everyday environments (p 323). It is ‘a commitment to the study and portrayal of the idiosyncratic and the particular as being a legitimate form of inquiry’ (p 320) and gets as close to the subject of interest as possible (partly by access to subjective factors such as thoughts, feelings and desires) in seeking to portray a phenomenon in its real-life context. As Han (2004a: 172) points out, focused investigation of the commonly proffered explanations for fossilization is necessary, not only to validate them, but also to assess the extent and scope of their influence on learning. It was therefore decided that a single case investigation was the most appropriate format for this research, as it would allow for a more in-depth investigation of the phenomenon.
1.6.2. Qualitative research

One of the features of the social sciences over the last years has been the continuous and sometimes acrimonious debate between the supporters of positivism and scientific, quantitative methods of enquiry, and those who support naturalistic research paradigms comprising ethnographic, qualitative methods (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995: 24). In agreement with an opinion voiced by R. A. King in 1987, Hitchcock and Hughes (pp 95-96) state that there is no ‘best method’; the method should suit the topic being explored. Therefore, if one views language acquisition as a complex confluence of individual and social variables, a holistic exploration may be more appropriate to reaching an understanding of how these variables interact to create observable outcomes.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 116) list the characteristics of qualitative research as follows:

- it is not concerned with testing preformulated hypotheses, but with developing ideas which are grounded in the data;
- it is more concerned with making sense of, understanding, and interpreting data than with quantifying and measuring them;
- data are collected in a variety of ways and settings;
- data are collected in natural, everyday situations and are not heavily structured by the researcher;
- as there is more emphasis on social processes, data analysis takes into account people’s meanings, feelings, interpretations and perceptions;
- ethnographic enquiry often focuses on a small number of participants and uses a wide range of sources.

Nunan (1992: 57) points out that in spite of reservations from those who support scientific methods of enquiry, qualitative enquiry is a valid tradition in its own right; it takes a more holistic approach to behavioural phenomena in that it recognizes and tries to describe the reciprocal relationship between context and behaviour. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 227) describe the human sciences as concerned with ‘interpretative understanding’, or an ‘inner understanding of meaningful conduct’. Furthermore, Nunan (1992: 53) argues that if we want to find out about human behaviour, we need to investigate it in its natural context:

It would seem to be a matter of common sense that if one wants to generalize one’s findings beyond the laboratory to the real world, then the research should be carried out in contexts which resemble those to which the researcher wishes to generalize.
Proponents of quantitative methods have questioned the reliability and validity of qualitative research. Because of the nature, quantity and variety of data yielded, not all of it can be printed in the published version, therefore evaluation and replication of the study by others may not be possible. Nunan (1992: 59-60) responds by saying that if a causal relationship is sought between variables in a qualitative study, the scope should be such that it provides the essential data on which this relationship is based, which will ensure internal validity; external validity, i.e. replicability, can be achieved by being as explicit as possible about procedures and methods.

The specific focus of this research study is how identifiable variables contribute to stabilization and/or fossilization. As Han's taxonomy (2004a: 29) shows, more than fifty causal factors have been identified by research, and these factors vary significantly as to presence, degree, duration, combination and effect from learner to learner and within the same learner. A comparative study may identify the differences between/amongst individual cases and may show which factors are more commonly associated with fossilization, whereas by focusing on one particular case, deeper insight into the nature and causes of the phenomenon may be gained. In the words of Han (2004a: 4):

> Given the context for most SLA today, a more holistic understanding of personal and communal opportunities to build L2 experience is appropriate.

Therefore, the issue of how and why fossilization appears in the second language acquisition process was investigated by examining the case of one adult learner, and qualitative research principles were incorporated in order to render as holistic a view as possible of an acquisition situation in which fossilization may be manifesting itself.

1.6.3. Longitudinal approach

Virtually all fossilization research designs have been criticized on some point. A longitudinal approach (observing a learner over a lengthy period of time) cannot encapsulate all aspects of the learning process and experience (since the researcher may not be aware of, nor have access to, every single instance of learning effort which was made, or input which the learner was exposed to during the period); a pseudo-longitudinal approach (using advanced learners as the source of fossilization) does not reveal enough about individual success or failure; a corrective-feedback approach (in which learners resistant to corrective feedback interventions are pronounced fossilized) may reveal more about the intervention itself than about the nature of the acquisition process; time approaches (length of residence or age of arrival in the target language
community) are not valid when learners do not reside in target language communities. Many fossilization findings have been based on limited observation periods or assessment of only one aspect of acquisition (Han 2004a: 87-102).

However, Han (2004a: 171) found that non-longitudinal studies tend to assume rather than establish the presence of fossilization. For future fossilization research, she recommends the best approach as one which involves longitudinal observation, differentiates between stabilization and fossilization, keeps product and process apart in empirical focus, and identifies the underlying processes or factors carefully, so that only well-grounded judgements will be made (p 172). It was therefore decided that detailed longitudinal investigation would be the most suitable research method for this inquiry into the phenomenon of fossilization.

In finalizing investigation procedures, establishing the criteria for identifying fossilization, and deciding on the general structure of this dissertation, the following longitudinal single case studies were found particularly relevant:

*Interaction, acculturation, and the acquisition of communicative competence: a case study of an adult* (Schmidt; 1983). This study explored a causal relationship between acculturation and grammatical development in a naturalistic learning situation. A Japanese adult English learner in Hawaii was observed over a period of three years. His linguistic competence was investigated according to Canale’s 1983 four-component communicative competence model, focusing in turn on grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Longitudinal observation showed that the subject’s overall competence progressed, yet his grammatical competence was pronounced fossilized. The latter was established by quantifying correct suppliance of nine basic morphemes in obligatory contexts: copula be, progressive/gerundial -ing, auxiliary be, past irregular forms, noun plural -s, third person singular -s, definite and indefinite articles, possessive -s, and past regular -ed.

*Error elimination and error fossilization: a study of an advanced learner* (Lennon; 1991). A German subject was interviewed 15 times during a six months’ stay in England which constituted her first exposure to a TL community. The interviews were unstructured and performance was analysed in five problematic grammatical areas, chosen by the researcher because errors were initially made very frequently in these areas: adverb order, use of *there is / there are*, use of *have got*, use and overuse of *always*, and future time forms. Based on close examination of chronological error-frequency comparisons, Lennon found that, although adverb order and future
time forms were 'candidates for fossilisable structures' (p 148), the subject's interlanguage was in a state of dynamic flux and definitely moving in the direction of native speaker usage.

**Acculturation theory and linguistic fossilization: a comparative case study (Ushioda: 1993).** The aim of this study was to find a correlation between acculturation and fossilization. Mostly unobserved recordings and field notes were made of two adult Japanese subjects, who had resided and worked in the TL community for 30 years, engaging in interactions with English-speaking friends in everyday situations over a period of five months (the subjects were the researcher's parents). Ushioda analysed levels of accuracy in the use of basic grammatical morphemes, and 'fossilized structural, linguistic and phonological features [were] identified in the performance data'. Oral output, grammaticality judgements, introspection, and written samples were used to compile a linguistic profile of each subject. Acculturation was found not to be the main correlative variable in fossilized second-language acquisition.

**Case and Tense in the steady 'fossilized' state (Lardiere: 1998).** Three recorded conversations with a Chinese subject who had emigrated to the USA at the age of 22 were transcribed and analysed. The first recording was made after 10 years' residence in the TL community, and the second and third were made 8½ years later, two months apart. Past tense marking and pronominal case marking were investigated by determining correct suppliance rates in obligatory finite contexts, which were carefully specified by Lardiere. Past tense marking was found to be fossilized, but pronominal case marking showed almost perfect distribution. Lardiere's findings show that syntactic and morphological development occurred independently from each other.

**Fossilization and stabilization in interlanguage development (Long 2003).** The Japanese subject of Long's study had immigrated to Hawaii at the age of 22; she had been living in the TL community for 37 years when the first data were recorded, and for 48 years when the second set of data were recorded. The same six instruments were used in both sessions to elicit oral output: a semi-structured interview, a picture-description task, a twenty-item repetition task, a six-frame cartoon-strip story description task, a sixty-item test of grammatical features, and a discussion with the subject of her performance on these tasks. The analysis focused on plural-s marking and past tense marking. Long reports that stabilization could not be diagnosed because the data showed a volatile combination of relatively stable correct supplings, relatively stable omissions, and free variation of errors.
1.7. Synopsis of the remainder of the dissertation

Chapter 2 presents a review of fossilization literature. Chapter 3 provides a description of methods of data elicitation, data analysis procedures, and the subject's language-learning background and current acquisition situation. Chapter 4 comprises the investigation of the data by means of which fossilization and its causal factors were identified. The research findings and their relevance to ESLA are discussed in Chapter 5. Appendices A - C contain research data referred to in the text.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature and research findings on fossilization. The origin of the concept in the field of Second Language Acquisition is described, after which it will be shown how the concept has evolved over the last thirty years owing to diverse views, theories, and research findings. The discussion is arranged according to the dominant issues in research and literature related to fossilization. The chapter ends with a summary of implications for fossilization research.

2.2 Origin of the term

The notion of linguistic fossilization can be traced back to what Weinreich, in his 1953 publication Languages in Contact, called 'permanent grammatical transfer', which he explained as first language forms transferred wrongly into the second language because of their perceived similarity or 'false equivalence' (Nakuma 1998: 247). Nemser posited in 1961 that all second language learners draw on an intermediate competence which is different, or deviant, from native-speaker competence, as it consists of 'permanent systems and subsystems' (cited in Han 2004a: 14). Larry Selinker coined the term fossilization in 1972, partly in response to his immigrant grandmother's decades-long struggle with English (Finneran 2006: 3), which sparked his life-long interest in problematic aspects of second language learning. His original definition (Selinker 1972: 229) implies that some elements of the learner's language will never proceed beyond faultiness:

Fossilization, a mechanism ... underlies the surface linguistic material which speakers will tend to keep in their interlanguage productive performance, no matter what the age of the learner or the amount of instruction he receives in the target language.

Selinker thus conceptualized fossilization as a performance-related structural phenomenon caused by an underlying cognitive mechanism. He suggested that some elements of the learner's first language influence the second language during the acquisition process, and that this causes permanent aberrant fixtures (1972: 215):

... fossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular L1 tend to keep in their IL [ interlanguage ] relative to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he
receiving in the TL... Fossilizable structures tend to remain as potential performance, reemerging in the productive performance of an IL even when seemingly eradicated.

2.3 Evolution of the construct

The speculativity, inherent negativity and contradictory inaccuracies of earlier definitions, statements and findings associated with the concept of fossilization have given rise to much criticism and reworking of the construct. Connotations of a neuro-cognitively predetermined lack of ability, cessation of acquisition, impossibility of progress, and inferiority to native speakers make the field of fossilization intrinsically interesting to second language theorists, researchers and practitioners.

2.3.1. Neuro-maturational factors

According to Lenneberg’s 1967 Critical Period Hypothesis, foreign languages have to be taught and learned through a laboured effort after the pubertal phase of life due to natural loss of neural language-learning plasticity. Lenneberg posited that cognitive, linguistic and perceptual functions are cerebrally lateralized after puberty, and the ability to ‘pick up a language’ the way children are observed to do, seems to disappear. However, the evidence on which this hypothesis rests was garnered from pathological cases, and it was developed in the context of first language acquisition (Brown 2000: 53).

Scholars such as Oyama (1976), Patkowski (1980), and Long (1990) suggest that in second language learning, ‘sensitive period’ is a more appropriate term, since this life-stage cannot here be as sharply delineated and does not have the same drastic cut-off effect which the critical period has in first language acquisition (cited in Han 2004a: 47). The bulk of studies researching the sensitive period hypothesis has yielded evidence pointing to its validity (Scovel 2000: 216). Taking into account findings such as those of Oyama’s 1976 study which gave evidence that age does correlate with L2 phonological acquisition amongst immigrants, Patkowski (1980: 464) hypothesizes that

... it is indeed possible to acquire a second language after the sensitive period, but it would theoretically not be possible to do so to the extent of attaining native-like proficiency and thus being able to pass for “native”. ... [the sensitive period notion] does not hold that extremely high, quasi-native levels cannot be attained in one or more areas.
In the case of adult learners, according to Selinker, the 'latent language structure' (Lenneberg's term for Chomsky's 'language acquisition device') is partially or not at all re-activated, causing adults to rely exclusively on their intellectual or cognitive powers; hence, most adult learners will demonstrate fossilization of some sort, especially when they consciously or unconsciously decide that they have reached a level of proficiency in the TL which is adequate for their TL communication needs (Martinez 1989: 2).

In addition to the generally inhibiting lateralization which settles in after the sensitive period, Selinker postulated another latent psychological structure, an underlying 'fossilization mechanism' which causes some form of permanently faulty acquisition in 95% of second language learners (Selinker 1972: 229). However, Nakuma (1998) and Hamilton (2001) consider this to be a fallacy: a brain mechanism which produces fossilization cannot only produce fossilization of error; logically, beneficial fossilization should also take place. However, Selinker insisted that the psychological structure promoting fossilization has no genetic timetable (Selinker 1972: 229), implying that fossilization may take place at an early stage or age in the learning process too, and may thus not be exclusive to adult SLA. Marinova-Todd et al (2000: 17) point out that brain-imaging experiments have not succeeded in relating differences in brain activity patterns to differences in target language proficiency between early and late L2 learners; neuro-science has not yet affirmed Selinker's claims.

Although Selinker soon adjusted his original definition of fossilization to '...a permanent cessation of learning ...in spite of the learner's positive ability ...' (my emphasis) (Selinker and Lamendella 1978: 187), Lowther (1983: 127) maintained that 'fossilization, as presented in much of the literature, is ... the inability of a person to attain native-like ability in the target language'.

Research findings by Birdsong (1992) demonstrated that near-native speakers and native speakers may produce virtually similar output, which shows that some adults are capable of mastering a second language. In a 1995 investigation, Ehrman and Oxford (1995) found that variables such as cognitive aptitude and beliefs about the self had a stronger effect on L2 learning outcomes than neuro-maturational variables. A study by Mcclelland, Fiez and McCandliss (2002) which was conducted in a Japanese context concluded that L2 perceptual and processing deficiencies may not be permanent if learners are provided with proper perceptual training. Referring to phonology, Stapp demonstrated that mimicry ability is not related to age, but is a talent which is available to particular individuals throughout life (Stapp 1999: 1).
The current general consensus is that sensitive period constraints impact most profoundly on phonology and morphosyntax in late L2 acquisition and that they are modular in nature, thereby affecting areas of language acquisition differentially at various stages of the learning process (Han 20C4a: 55). An exclusively neuro-maturational explanation of failure in adult L2 acquisition has, however, been rejected, as it is widely accepted that age together with other potentially negative non-biological factors such as linguistic background, cognitive-academic ability or socio-cultural influences may play a crucial role in the adult L2 acquisition process. There is greater difficulty in isolating the causes of fossilization in adult subjects because their lives tend to grow more complex over time, so that research has to deal with more (and more diffuse) variables (Finneran 2006: 3). Michael Knowles, long-time advocate of andragogy (adult-centred education) as a separate construct from pedagogy in educational psychology, premises his hypothesis on the following five points: adult learners are independent, unlike children; they bring a reservoir of knowledge and life experience to the learning process; they have more clearly defined goals; their orientation to learning is more mature and committed; and their motivation to learn has become internal (Knowles: 1984). It can therefore be said that, in addition to inhibitive neuro-maturational factors, adult language learning is also complicated by the more challenging circumstances and accompanying psychological complexities in the lives of adults. Therefore, in the words of MacWhinney (2005: 14), '... a plausible account [of fossilization] will have to show how ageing combines with other factors ... and to see how fossilization patterns emerge from these combinations.'

2.3.2. Universal Grammar

'Universal Grammar' refers to the innate human capacity to acquire a (first) language. The existence of this phenomenon was inferred by Chomsky in 1965 on the grounds that all languages share the same universal principles and categories, which all normal children acquire in the same manner (Richards and Smith 2002: 570-572). Chomsky's theory is not fully accepted by all scholars in the field, therefore the issue of parameter settings (referring to deep grammatical categories that fuse meaning in a language) in second language acquisition is a moot point. Languages are said to set their parameters differently; older SL learners struggle to acquire the idiomatic fluency which is unique to every language because the natural 'language acquisition device' (Chomsky's term) which 'wires' the child to universal grammar principles is not available to the adult learner once the critical or sensitive learning period has passed.
On whether universal grammar principles are available to adult L2 learners in the learning process, Nakuma reports contradictory study outcomes: Clahsen (1988) found that they are not, Schachtter (1989) found that they are, but only partially, whereas White (1988) concluded that they are fully available to the adult language learner (cited in Nakuma 1998: 248).

In a study of first-language attrition of long-term immigrants who had been completely immersed in their second language and culture (in one case, for 57 years), Fritsch-Cornet (2005) found that what had fossilized were abstract concepts underlying the first language and which continued to influence the second language negatively. She posits that because of their observed longitudinal persistence, linguistic-cognitive conceptualizations such as tense, mode, spatiality and morphosyntactic structures constitute the unique ‘deep structure’ of each language. Research by Grossman and Ash (2004) on senile progressive aphasias and semantic dementia which combined neuro-imaging with linguistic tasks found that patients with simultaneous regression in all linguistic domains are rare, and that impairment seemed to affect knowledge associated with objects and lexical recall more, and earlier, than number and abstract knowledge. These findings imply that the grammar or ‘deep structure’ of the first language becomes very deeply embedded in the adult mind, and that its pervasive influence may therefore be very hard to counter when an additional language is learned.

However, second language learning may not involve restructuring at the level of cognitive deep structures, but may necessitate ‘the acquisition of additional sets of syntactic, phonological and lexical rules necessary for the realization of language independent deep structures ...’ (my emphasis) (Vigil and Oller 1972: 282). MacWhinney (2005: 9) summarises the conundrum of UG parameter setting in SLA as follows:

Lacking any independent biological or psychological grounding, this theory must rely on linguistic constraints to determine these predictions. If the constraints are set on the basis of evidence derived from L2 learning and fossilization, this [argument] becomes circular and vacuous.

Researchers who do not support the special nativist or innatist claims of UG do, however, keep an open mind to the possibility of a more general nativism, which does ascribe some aspects of the acquisition process to innate cognitive functions (Foster-Cohen 1999: 5). For example, researchers such as N. Ellis have drawn the tentative conclusion from their investigations that memory for instances and associations may play a more crucial role in second language
acquisition than the kind of rule-based acquisition predicted by UG theory (cited in Foster-Cohen: 9).

2.3.3. Native-speaker norms

In a 1996 research proposal, Selinker stated that no adult can ever hope to speak a second language 'in such a way that s/he is indistinguishable from native speakers of that language' (cited in Han 2004a: 15). Schachter holds the opinion that the overwhelming majority of adult learners are not able to achieve 'anything like the same level of mastery as that achieved by any normal child' (Schachter 1996: 160); and Rod Ellis concluded that 'L2 learners, unlike L1 learners, generally do not reach the same level of competence as native speakers; their final state grammar is not the target-language grammar ... thus certain rules and items fossilize' (Ellis 1994: 353).

These citations demonstrate how what Birdsong (2003: 1) calls the 'ontological linchpin' of fossilization, non-nativeness, has added to the concept's pejorative connotations. Nevertheless, exposure to authentic forms and uses of the target language is considered a logical mainstay of learning a language. The existence of varieties of English within the UK and the US (such as regional, class or generational dialects) and many varieties in previous colonies compounds the issue of which accent and standard should be emulated in English second language acquisition.

In arguing against using native proficiency as a norm, Birdsong (2003: 3) points out research by Gass (1989), Nagata (1988) and Carroll, Bever and Poliack (1981) which found evidence of inconsistent grammaticality judgements among native speakers, thereby implying that erratic output is not the exclusive domain of the L2 learner. Speakers of a language may also use different forms to convey the same meaning; therefore, in the words of Larsen-Freeman (1997: 147-148) '... the rules themselves are shaped by the discourse'.

Valdés (1999: 44) criticizes the use of a negatively formulated final-outcome descriptor:

The question of how long a student can be considered a language learner, placed in the ESL compartment, and seen as an incipient bilingual, is a complex one. While most scholars in the field of second language agree that second language learning is not identical to first language learning and that the key difference is that a second language is generally not acquired perfectly, scholars have not yet developed criteria for evaluating when a given individual can be considered to have passed from the incipient or learning
stage of bilingualism to the fully developed stage.

Larsen-Freeman (2005: 50) protests against the target-centric nature of most of SLA assessment enterprises and argues against setting a prescriptive end state norm at all:

What if we acknowledge, instead, that there is no end state because, first of all, there is no end? There is no finite uniformity to conform to... when we entertain a view of language as a dynamic and complex adaptive system.

Unhelpfully, Selinker and Lamendella (1979: 374) have asserted the following:

... senescence constitutes an inevitable upper bound after which IL fossilization necessarily occurs for all members of our species.

Han (2004a: 115) cautions as follows against assumed target norms:

In fossilization research, which is essentially target-language-referenced, identifying and defining the target language takes on particular importance, given the existence of multiple varieties of English. Concerted effort should be made at the outset of research to determine the nature of the social and linguistic environment within which learners have developed their L2. Care should be taken to ensure that the target language against which the interlanguage is examined is indeed what the subjects have been exposed to. In addition, external and internal perspectives might both be necessary to ensuring that what researchers determine to be the norm is indeed the norm pursued by the subjects.

Although native speech and speakers are a prerequisite for collecting baseline data and as a touchstone when analyzing results in SLA research, acquisition often takes place in contexts in which there is little or no contact with native speakers (Doman 2005: 6). Nunn, attempting to define competence in 'international English' as an alternative norm, argues that in the real world competence cannot be limited to a single, limited, monolingual and monocultural concept; rather, second language achievement should be looked at as a set of competences that 'sometimes compensate for each other, sometimes counteract each other, and sometimes reinforce each other' (cited in Doman 2005: 6).

Moreover, the elevation of native speech as the ideal has been seen from the socio-cultural angle as a sign of disrespect for other languages and cultures, as it implies that the learner's first language is primarily a source of aberrance and that the global goal of English second language learning is oral communication with native speakers (Pennycook 1994: 167, 169).
Nonnative speakers of English are currently estimated at 1-2 billion, far outweighing the number of native English speakers (Doughty and Long 2003: 3). Since the majority of the world’s population is multilingual and living in multilingual environments, multilingualism is in reality the norm, not the exception (Nelde 2002: 325). Many, if not the majority of speakers, acquire English for purely pragmatic and utilitarian purposes and do not see themselves as consumers of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, therefore the acquisition of a native-like accent is no longer the ultimate objective of the majority of English learners (Talebinezhad 2001: 3). Moyer (2004: 46) maintains that since accent is not a deterrent to comprehensibility, native-likeness should not be the prime norm for successful L2 phonological outcome.

Regarding fossilization, the main thrust of these criticisms is that a satisfactory understanding of native-speaker norms, which are so often used as a prerequisite for accounts of stabilization or fossilization, has not yet been achieved. (Finneran 2006: 2)

2.3.4 First-language transfer

All learning involves, to some extent, previous learning. According to Bialystok (1994: 163),

the mental representations developed in the course of first language acquisition provide the starting point for the representations that will be developed for the second language. Similarly, the attentional procedures developed for processing a first language are the basis for building up the new procedures needed for the second.

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which was developed in the 1950s and 1960s, claimed that the principal barrier in acquiring a second language, and therefore the main source of erroneous outcomes, is the first language (Brown 2000: 207, 208) The hypothesis posited that the greater the structural difference between the first and the second language, the more the learner will struggle in the acquisition process. This ‘competition’ between the L1 and the TL may be further aggravated when the two languages do not use the same orthographic script, and more so when one uses a phonemic script and the other does not (as in the case of English and Chinese). The second language is even seen by some as ‘parasitic’:

Parasitism occurs because the L1 form is already well consolidated and entrenched by the time the learner tries to add the L2 form to the map.

(MacWhinney 2005: 12).
The problems encountered when testing the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis empirically are summarized by Towell and Hawkins (1994: 18-19) as follows: not all areas of contrast between the L1 and the TL lead to automatic learner difficulty; not all areas of similarity lead to positive transfer; and only a relatively small proportion of errors can be attributed to the L1 unambiguously.

Kellerman (1989) investigated a single aspect of proficiency: the research focused on the use of English past conditional sentences by Dutch learners, and found evidence of a correlation between the first language structure and the errors made in the second language. A 1996 study by Schwartz and Sprouse demonstrated the difficulties an adult Turkish learner had in acquiring German verb-subject patterns; he had shown mastery at early stages, yet he invariably reverted to native language patterns at subsequent stages. The authors concluded that, in regard to verb usage, the subject's interlanguage would fossilize and 'never mirror that of the TL, German' because 'UG options could not be activated' to bridge the divide between L1 and L2 patterns (Schwartz and Sprouse 1996: 49). Sorace (1993) investigated advanced French and English learners of Italian by means of a grammaticality judgement test. Her findings showed that the French subjects were sensitive to both semantic and syntactic aspects of unaccusativity in the TL, whereas the English subjects were only sensitive to semantic aspects. An analysis of the relevant structures in English and French showed that the differential outcomes could be attributed to patterns in the subject's respective first languages.

On the other hand, a study by Dulay and Burt (1974) found that less than 5% of the 500 syntactic and morphological errors committed by 179 Spanish learners of English unambiguously reflected their first language. In 1972, Whitman and Jackson administered a 42-point test to 2500 Japanese learners of English in order to determine the relative difficulty of grammatical items; their findings led them to conclude that contrastive analysis is inadequate, theoretically and practically, in predicting interference problems in L2 learning (cited in Brown 2000: 212).

The hypothesis does not therefore fully explain why learners construct certain grammatical L2 representations correctly but not others. Although research such as the studies referred to above corroborates L1 transfer as a source of faulty adult L2 acquisition, the many successful adult learners of a language which is typologically very different from their own show that this is not always the case. The saliency of cross-linguistic interference attested to by research does not imply that this interference is the most crucial factor in SLA, since adult SL learners have also
been observed to make the same errors as children learning their first language (Brown 2000: 68).

Errors made by L2 learners may also be specific to, or resultant from, the nature of the L2 rather than caused by interference from the mother tongue. As English is reckoned to be the largest language in the world in terms of vocabulary and is characterized by many exceptions and idiomatic oddities, SL learners may have more problems acquiring irregular forms as opposed to regular forms (MacWhinney 2005: 14). This may also be a contributing factor to the simplification or pidginization which is so often observed at earlier stages of the SLA process: the learner simplifies (or pidginizes) what is perhaps (still) too sophisticated to be internalized entirely. Although Corder (1978, cited in Selinker 1993: 16) posited that one cannot simplify what one does not know, and that therefore SLA consists primarily of linguistic complexification, Selinker (1993: 16) feels that this argument is 'too general', and claims that learners simplify target language '... [which] could perhaps lead to fossilization'.

Odlin (2002: 261) points out that research into panlinguistic similarities and dissimilarities has ushered in a growing interest in researching the role of emotion in second language acquisition, as some speech acts and conceptual patterns are not readily relinquished when learners attempt a new language.

In spite of decades of research and numerous studies that contest aspects of the debate, some generalities have not been disproved and are currently still seen as valid. The first language may give the teacher or the learner clues as to the origin of some errors, and to why and how certain items or structures begin to stabilize in the learner's interlanguage.

2.3.5 Interlanguage

In a behaviourist paradigm errors are ascribed to poor linguistic habits developing from insufficient conditioning; in a nativist paradigm the study of erroneous linguistic production is seen as an opportunity to gain insight into the cognitive processes underlying language acquisition and use. The language of adult SL acquirers, like the language of children learning their mother tongue, is seen to undergo constant change, presumably along a continuum. Corder introduced the idea of a dysfunctional yet systematic idiosyncracy in learner language in 1978 (cited in Martnez 1989: 2), claiming that the learner displays a rule-governed transitional competence on his/her way to native-speaker competence. It is therefore an 'idiosyncratic
dialect' in that the rules of the learner's language are peculiar to the language of that individual alone; it is unique to the individual, as is any other fully-developed human language, and like the language of poets, toddlers and aphasics, it is not a language of institutional and social conformity. Corder stated that only by treating learner language as a phenomenon to be studied in its own right can we hope to develop an understanding of the processes of second language acquisition.

Within a few years error analysis replaced contrastive analysis as the principal activity of those researching language learning. When Selinker first introduced the term 'interlanguage', he wrote that he felt 'justified, even compelled, to hypothesize the existence of interlanguage ... because the utterances most learners of a second language produce are not identical to those a native speaker would have produced had he intended to express the same meaning as the learner' (Selinker 1972: 214). Interlanguage has been more generally defined as a system which is distinct from both the native language and the target language, although it may share some elements and overtones of both (Spolsky 1979: 254).

Selinker sees interlanguage as a continuum in which L2 learners continually practise progressive restructuring as they deal with increasing complexity. In the case of most adult learners, according to Selinker, the 'latent language structure' (Lenneberg's term for Chomsky's 'language acquisition device') is partially or not at all re-activated, causing them to rely exclusively on their intellectual or cognitive powers. Selinker has at times voiced his dissatisfaction with the quasi-synonymy with which the term interlanguage, Corder's terms transitional competence and idiosyncratic dialect, and Nemser's term approximative system have been used, because he feels strongly that each of the three makes different theoretical claims about the nature of the SLA process (cited in Nickel 1998: 2). However, all three are essentially concerned with the interplay of variability and systematicity in the SL acquisition process. What is pertinent to a study of fossilization is that in these views, a certain amount of turbulence is natural during the phases of SL acquisition; fossilization would therefore have to be empirically distinguished from continually erroneous language which, in spite of recurrent errors, is progressing towards mastery.

In the field of pidgin and Creole studies ('creolistics') which emerged in the 1960s, many studies were published showing that these 'inferior' versions were, in fact, legitimate, rule-governed varieties of language (Siegel 2002: 338). Although most teaching programmes discourage the use of pidgin or Creole in the learning situation, it has been observed that when students are
encouraged to examine features of their own varieties in the classroom, they have a greater chance of noticing features that are different in the standard language; this helps them to build the mental representations of the standard that is necessary for language acquisition (Siegel: 348).

Brown (2000: 227-229) recommends that interlanguage be thought of as manifesting itself in four stages: the stage of random errors or 'wild guessing', the emergent stage in which the learner begins to show more consistency in output, the 'systemic' stage in which more target-like forms occur more consistently and the learner becomes capable of correcting errors when they are pointed out by others, and the fourth stage, in which a certain amount of mastery is obvious and self-correction is observed. It is at this fourth stage that the learner may, according to Brown, stabilize too fast and allow minor errors to become a habit. However, empirical evidence has not proven unequivocally that interlanguage is a creative continuum (Martínez 1989: 6).

Serious problems have arisen from the instability and variance observed in learners' interlanguages. For example, in 1974 Scott and Tucker (1974) tried hard to find regularity in the interlanguage of Arab students learning English; they found, however, that there were enough errors and enough correct approximations to postulate the existence of two simultaneous systems. Interlanguage as a special type of natural language is characterized by instability because it is subject to invasion by new forms; according to Larsen-Freeman (1997: 156), this surface instability is 'merely the tip of the iceberg'.

Schachter (1974) realized that her study findings could not be accepted as accurate because some learners had avoided certain structures, whereas those who had not, had used them erroneously; the absence of errors, therefore, does not necessarily reflect mastery of knowledge or skills. Gathercole (1998, cited in Brown 2000: 34) reported on a number of studies in which young learners could produce accurate TL structures although they did not understand what they were saying. Martínez (1989: 6) observed that a large number of interlanguage utterances constitute memorized routines and patterns, making the exact path of interlanguage development very hard to trace. Selinker (1972) introduced the term 'backsliding' to refer to the reappearance of faulty forms after they had been thought to have been eradicated from the interlanguage. He ascribed this to contextual reasons such as focusing exclusively on meaning when using the SL, or emotional variables. Backsliding can only occur when the correct form /has
been acquired by the learner, and thus differentiates fossilization (in which the correct form
never appears) from unstable interlanguage.

Spolsky (1979: 255) comments that interlanguage can be seen as an attempt to add
respectability to the study of errors and that it has not lived up to its potential in the SLA field:

A great deal of difficulty ... arises out of first assuming an interlanguage, a presumably
complete grammar that has been internalized by the learner, but attempting to establish
its existence by using fairly limited tests of errors made with certain morphological
elements. As a result of this sketchy sampling of knowledge, the picture that emerges
remains ... confused.

Spolsky feels that interlanguage research should be more sophisticated and that painstakingly
designed studies, repeated at various intervals, which yield both longitudinal and setting-specific
data, are called for (Spolsky 1979: 255). In spite of his criticism, he points out that interlanguage
is a valid construct because, in keeping with socio-linguistic trends, it suggests a pragmatic
acceptance of a 'local' variety of the target language, in much the same way that pidgins,
'creole', regional dialects and 'World Englishes' have come to be accepted as legitimate
varieties worthy of academic scrutiny and international publishing (1979: 255).

When no progression towards mastery can be found in a learner's language, stabilization is said
to have set in. The term has been wrongly used as a synonym for fossilization, since stabilized
interlanguage may include variation, whereas fossilization denotes unchangeability. Stabilization
can be better thought of as a harbinger or indicator of future fossilization, and Han cautions that
the two concepts should be kept apart in theory and empirical enquiry (2004a: 103).

2.3.6. The socio-cultural dimension

Criticizing the predominant use of psychological paradigms in language acquisition research,
Norton and Toohey (2002: 119) note that many theorists and researchers tend to view SLA as a
mental process, believing that language acquisition resides mostly, if not solely, in the brain.
Currently, the acquisition of a second language is increasingly being viewed as a primarily socio-
culturally situated practice and not as 'individual minds acquiring language' (Norton and Toohey
2002: 119); linguistic form alone cannot determine meaning, therefore the social and cultural
contexts of language learning activities must be taken into account to give a full portrayal of the language learning process (Kramsch 2002: 11) and should be included in fossilization perspectives.

Schumann’s 1975 Acculturation Model of acquisition hypothesizes that the social-psychological distance between the learner and target culture will determine the level of success or failure in the acquisition process (Brown 2000: 186). The findings of Schumann’s 1976 study of a Costa Rican adult immigrant’s L2 acquisition struggles (summarised in Ushioda: 1993) led him to hypothesize that the early stages of acquisition are similar to pidginization. Some learners fail to progress beyond this rudimentary stage because, like pidgin-speakers, they are linguistically disadvantaged and constrained by their lack of socio-cultural affinity or familiarity with forms of the target language and culture.

Acton’s ‘optimal perceived social distance theory’ (1979, cited in Brown 2000: 188) also ascribed failed L2 outcomes to negative affective perspectives of the surrounding foreign culture: learners who acquire mostly non-linguistic techniques of coping before they have overcome culture shock will probably never master the L2 correctly, as they have come to rely for survival on fossilized forms.

However, in a detailed study of her Japanese parents’ linguistic proficiency after thirty years of residence in Ireland, Ushioda (1993) concluded that there were problems in applying the predictions of the acculturation hypothesis to the results of her study. Both parents had acculturated superbly and were fluent users of the TL, yet her father demonstrated superior linguistic competence. She offers the explanation that differences in aptitude and language needs may have played a crucial role: the demands of her father’s work as a university lecturer in an English environment necessitated a high level of accuracy in addition to fluency, whereas her mother had mostly operated in a social environment of sympathetic small talk in which linguistic errors were overlooked. Yet, in spite of their successful acculturation, both parents occasionally displayed fossilized phonological forms as well as (mostly in her mother’s case) fossilized syntactical forms. Ushioda thus demonstrates that insufficient acculturation cannot singularly predict fossilization.

Based on the findings of her study of the acquisition of German by 15 well-educated immigrants (from Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, French, Turkish, British and American L1 backgrounds) to
Germany, Moyer (2004: 135) concludes that social influences correlate as strongly with ultimate L2 attainment as psychological and maturational factors. She recommends (pp 147-148) that given these complexities, SLA research must try harder to account for these issues. The situation of most late learning today begs for examination of the learning environment, the learner’s cumulative experience, and the learner’s developing sense of self as a speaker of the target language. 

Furthermore, whereas most children acquire their first language in a supportive and input-rich environment, MacWhinney (2005: 26) notes that adult learners are not always treated sympathetically, and may withdraw socially if they perceive negative attitudes from TL speakers, as often happens in multicultural environments. The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported (Mind Your Speech, Gulf News 23 July 2006, p 22) that in 2005, 11% of the private-sector complaints it processed were complaints of discrimination on grounds of national origin, language or accent, of which half were submitted by Hispanics. Native English speakers construed playful banter from foreigners as verbal harassment, and misinterpreted silences of incomprehension from persons of ‘face-saving cultures’ such as China as unwillingness to speak, inability to work, or belligerence; foreigners, in turn, misinterpreted typical American ‘blunt speech’ as negative personal attitudes. This signifies that socio-cultural affective variables must be reckoned with in the L2 learning experience. Nelde (2002: 328-329) points out that in some multilingual milieux, additional-language acquisition happens by coercion or for the sake of survival; according to Doughty and Long (2003: 5), each year tens of millions of people are obliged to learn a second language or another variety of their own language because they are forced to migrate across borders for reasons of work, war, drought, famine, or ethnic cleansing. Intake may be very negatively influenced by socio-cultural affective factors in such cases, of which the history of the Afrikaans language in South Africa’s apartheid era is a salient example. In the recent Israel-Lebanon war, Israeli reconnaissance troops disguised as Lebanese soldiers were captured in Lebanon by Hezbollah forces because their Hebrew-accented Arabic gave them away (Accent Leads to Capture, Khaleej Times, 21 August 2006 p 13) – an example of what may happen in a hostile L2 acquisition situation.

2.3.7. Input

Input has been found to be of crucial importance in acquiring a second language. Valette (1991: 236) recommends that in studying the phenomenon of fossilization, the distinction between ‘school’ learners and ‘street’ learners – those who have ‘studied the language’ and those who have ‘picked it up’ – is useful. In institutional contexts input is structured according to a syllabus,
pedagogical methodology and desired outcomes; in non-institutional contexts the learner is exposed to random input occurring naturally in a variety of settings. Both of these acquisition milieux have been found to promote fossilization.

2.3.7.1. Instruction

Gass and Selinker (1994: 150) state the following:

Errors are only errors from the teacher’s or researcher’s perspective, not from the learner’s. Taken from the perspective of the learner who has created a systematic entity called an interlanguage, everything that forms part of that interlanguage system by definition belongs there. Hence, there can be no errors in that system. Errors are only errors with reference to some external norm.

It follows logically that the teacher will have to make the learner aware that an error has, or that errors have, been committed. Whether errors should be overtly corrected, and to what extent, has been a contentious issue in the field of SLA, and in the fossilization field in particular, since fossilization is fundamentally characterized by wrongness, resistance, and persistence. Authors who support the theory that a second language is best internalized in the same way as a first language, insist that negative evidence (overt treatment of errors) is not important to the learning process since it does not play an important role in first language acquisition (Antokhin 2000: 8). Others have postulated that the adult learner needs either direct error treatment or more subtle hints as to the incorrectness in his or her output, since cognitive problem-solving components play an important role in adult acquisition, and experiments in the field of psychology have shown that negative feedback is useful to adults in concept learning (Antokhin 2000: 9). Carroll and Swain (1993) conducted an experiment with 100 adult Spanish learners of English which concentrated on the dative structure; after a period of teacher training, five separate approaches to errors were implemented and outcomes were assessed. The group which had received immediate remedial attention fared the best, whereas the group that had not been given any feedback to errors fared the worst, which led the researchers to conclude that adult learners ‘can and do use feedback to learn specific and abstract linguistic generalizations’ (Carroll and Swain 1993: 358). Vigil and Oller (1976: 285) claim that negative feedback is the principal destabilizing factor of learner grammars: ‘If the corrective feedback ... drops below some minimal level or disappears altogether, the grammar ... will fossilize.’ However, Selinker and Lamendella (1979: 364) maintain that feedback will only have a remedial effect if the intervention is experienced by the learner as ‘positive in its affective dimension’. Selinker, Kim and Bandi-Rao (2004: 92) are of the opinion that feedback or correction will not work equally on all linguistic
properties and with all individuals – 'a variable cognitive result [that] should become more widely known'.

Although Hendrickson, Burt and Kiparsky (1974, cited in Antokhin 2000: 13) advised that errors should be identified as either local (relatively unimportant and not impeding communication) or global (relatively serious and obscuring communication) and the two types of errors should be treated differently, Antokhin (2000) found that many erroneous structures in learner language fall somewhere between local and global, making it difficult to decide how to respond to the error.

Felix and Weigl (1991) conducted a grammaticality judgment study to test whether UG principles were in operation in adolescent German learners who had only been exposed to their L2, English, in the classroom. The outcomes showed that the learners merely judged structures which they had encountered in their classroom learning as acceptable, and those not encountered before as wrong. In conclusion, the authors expressed their pessimism about classroom second language learning as follows (p. 178):

What is being taught in the classroom represents only a small portion of the structural complexities and intricacies of natural language; and typically, most of the deeper properties are not taught. If the results of our study are not merely accidental, it is precisely these deeper properties that our students fail to acquire.

Valette (1991: 325-326) observes that some instructors have themselves not attained grammatical mastery of the language that they are teaching, and that in such a situation only very highly motivated learners will try to unlearn their own errors. Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (1997: 147) observes that current popular models of grammar do not capture the dynamism and variability of language usage very well. On the other hand, instruction may combat unbalanced memory-driven development: learners have a natural tendency towards communication and meaning, but by focusing continually on structure, the likelihood of inflexibility and fossilization is preemptively reduced (Butler-Tanaka 2000: 10).

Gass and Selinker (1994: 151) identified classroom instruction as a source of fossilization in that it may prolong interlanguage deviance if the input is highly selective or impoverished; corrective strategies may also be ineffective, complicated structures may be introduced too soon, and repetition and overlearning of forms in isolation may set up barriers to meaningful acquisition. Mukattash (1986), analyzing the written L2 productions of 80 Arabic learners of English at a
Jordanian university, found that after 11 years of instruction involving robust explanation and error correction, they continued to use the simple past tense when the simple present tense was called for.

The teaching approach known as 'grammatical consciousness-raising' combines attention to structure and errors with using material in which the targeted features appear in authentic samples and contexts. Explicit teaching of rules and complicated grammatical jargon is mostly avoided. It is an example of the learner-centred approach which has superseded the older teacher-centred approach. However, this method has been criticized for assuming inductive reasoning ability in learners, as they are expected to discover the rules underlying correct usage for themselves, thereby broadening rather than lessening the margin of error in general. Points of contention include the amount of explicit teacher input in dealing with learners' wrong outcomes, the unequal pace at which learners in a group may discover, and the method's reliance on assumed prior intellectual skills (Butler-Tanaka 2000: 27-36).

Although the 'communicative revolution' in SL teaching was an effort to improve classroom acquisition by promoting naturalistic context in instructional activities, it has been accused of promoting fossilization (Whitley 1993: 141) as it emphasizes message above grammatical accuracy and may pressurize learners to produce output too soon; fossilization is likely to set in if minimally functional speech is reinforced for content alone, with no internal reason for the speaker to improve. On the other hand, studies by Lightbown (1987), Savignon (1972) and Montgomery and Eisenstein (1985) (cited in Butler-Tanaka 2000: 10) found that when communicative elements were introduced into a mostly grammar-drill-orientated programme, learners showed greater progress.

Headlines from 2006 UK newspaper articles (which were syndicated in UAE newspapers) show that first language instruction is being criticized for not achieving targets in the UK: Teaching Method Found Unhelpful (Khaleej Times, 15 February); Even the Best Pupils Give Up On Grammar (Khaleej Times, 16 April); Never Mind the Mistakes, Examiners Told (Khaleej Times, 12 June); Schools Fail to Teach Basic Skills (Khaleej Times, July 22); Fun Lessons Don't Challenge Pupils (Gulf News, 11 March); Teachers Fail Literacy and Numeracy Tests (Gulf News, 4 September); Devastating Scale of Poor English and Maths Skills in Britain's Workforce Laid Bare (Gulf News, 20 October); British Students Worse at English Than Foreigners (Gulf News, 2 November) and UK Illiteracy Crisis Spells Catastrophe, Says Study (Gulf News: 5 December). This
implies that even in the first language, skilled instruction is needed in order to develop linguistic proficiency levels suitable for the workplace and other areas of formal communication, and that fossilization may also manifest itself in the first language.

Current evidence also suggests that, perhaps due to the overriding focus on assessment events in the instruction process, whatever effect classroom learning produces may wear off after some time (Towell and Hawkins 1994: 256). What may further aggravate acquisition endeavours in the classroom are the many and often indeterminable socio-psychological variables at play at any given time.

2.3.7.2 Naturalistic acquisition

Much the same can, of course, be said about naturalistic or ‘street’ L2 acquisition. Carroll and Swain (1993) state that naturalistic linguistic input is incomplete and could be misleading as the basis for constructing hypotheses about principles of grammar, because negative evidence, which is useful to adults in conceptual learning, is largely absent. Referring to what he calls the ‘myth of natural acquisition’ in L2 learners resident in a target language community, Shekhtman (2003: 2) remarks as follows:

Native speakers generally do not correct students and through this omission reinforce all types of linguistic and sociocultural fossilization. Native speakers, not usually being foreign-language teachers, also do not effectively provide new sophisticated structures and vocabulary. More important, they do not help students to memorize new elements of the language. As a result, students reinforce what they know ... in a very slow and ineffective way.

According to the tenets of Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (Brown 2000: 278), inferior acquisition and by implication its extreme, fossilization, may be predicted when one, more or all of the following conditions apply:

- the learner is only consciously or cerebrally learning knowledge of the TL, not truly acquiring or internalizing it as a real and usable entity;
- the learner over-monitors his or her output inappropriately;
- the learner acquires the language in an unnatural or confusing order;
- the input is either too challenging or not challenging enough for the learner;
- the affective filter is high (the learner is undergoing some negative psychological experience).

Krashen’s hypothesis has been ‘hotly disputed’ by scholars on the grounds that, although intuitively appealing, it is based on ‘swampy empirical ground’ (Whitley 1993: 133) and much of it is largely undemonstrable. How, for example, can it be determined which parts of learner output have been cerebrally learned and which have been subconsciously acquired? How does a teacher ensure that ‘non-conscious acquisition’ takes place? The major claim of the hypothesis, that comprehensible input is the most fundamental causative variable in second language acquisition (Brown 2000: 279, 280), has been widely attacked: as it seems to downplay the role of grammar teaching, many teachers have misconstrued the hypothesis and have either done away with grammar teaching altogether or ignored errors as long as the learner’s message is fathomable, thereby creating the conditions for fossilization to set in (Whitley 1993: 136).

Krashen’s hypothesis has also been countered by Swain and Lapkin’s Output Hypothesis, which posits that output (or learner production, or observable forms of practice) may be as important as, if not more important than, input in L2 acquisition (cited in Brown 2000: 281). However, whether overt participation by learners can lead to acquisition has yet to be indisputably proven (Doman 2005: 7). The observation has been made that, when a learner realizes that he or she is not being understood, there is a motive to rethink and restructure some aspect(s) of the interlanguage (Selinker 1993: 24). This may apply equally to natural conversational situations and assessment situations; but once the immediate objective has been achieved, the learner may ‘backslide’ to faulty versions in less demanding contexts, which underscores Corder’s characterization of interlanguage as normally unstable (Selinker 1993: 24).

As was pointed out in Section 2.3.6, whereas classroom proceedings are regulated by polite standards of social interaction, some naturalistic L2 learners have to contend with social phenomena such as chauvinism, xenophobia, sexism, ethnic hatred, racism and war, which cause very negative affective associations with the target language and result in poor learning outcomes.
2.4 Conclusion

Being the extreme form of unsuccessful outcome, fossilization is pertinent to all aspects of second language acquisition. As has been shown in the above review, inferences about fossilization are often drawn from acquisition studies which do not have fossilization per se, but less radical aspects of acquisition as their specific empirical objective; such findings are of relevance to all teachers and researchers concerned with aspects of unsuccessful learning outcomes. Some theorists feel, however, as Bierbaumer (1997: 2) does, that the term 'fossilization' is 'a very unhappy one'. He points out that Selinker, when asked why he 'believes in fossilization', answered: 'I guess the reason is because I'm a fossilized learner par excellence in several languages.' Since Bierbaumer, a native speaker of a Styrian-Bavarian German dialect, finds that his own command of Russian, Italian and French fluctuates according to whether or not he has been exposed to or using the language for a while, he objects to Selinker's phrase 'fossilized learner' because it implies impossibility of further progress, and he reaches the following verdict (Bierbaumer 1997: 4):

> It seems clear to me that the term fossilization does not adequately describe the phenomena it denotes and, moreover, I cannot see a single learning situation where a term implying the inevitability of a negative process or state would be helpful.

Mukattash (1986: 201) expresses doubt about the pedagogic usefulness of the term:

> If research could prove that certain error types are unsusceptible to defossilization, then the time and effort expended in the correction of such errors could be more fruitfully employed in the teaching of new material ... so far, this task of prediction has proved to be impossible.

Yorio (1985, cited in Selinker 1993: 21-22) considered fossilization the most pressing issue he had had to face in dealing with ESL classroom writing, but after reviewing the fossilization literature up till 1985 he concluded that it was lacking in useful principles.

Some authors have remarked on the selective application of the fossilization metaphor. Is the term 'defossilized', for example, logically acceptable? De Prada Creo (1990: 3) found that the 25 near-native-speaker subjects of an introspection-based study she undertook were aware of the 'fossils' in their output, but did not experience these as problematic in any sense. They were all teachers of their second language, and were satisfied with their level of command as adequate for their daily professional and social purposes. They were confident that if their circumstances
had to change and the new workplace or social environment demanded more accuracy, their learning faculties would be revitalized (De Prada Creo 1990: 15). This underscores the question whether, if a linguistic 'fossil' can disappear or change shape, it should have been called a fossil in the first place.

The 'father of fossilization', Selinker, has periodically criticized the fossilization field in SLA for its rambling range of disparate perspectives, studies and conclusions: '... the fossilization literature is widespread and diffuse ...'; '... the dire straits of things in this area ...' (1993: 14); 'We need to ... ask ourselves ... why colleagues at times appear emotional about this topic' (1993: 22); 'We must report that we find the fossilization literature, as a scientific literature, quite bizarre.' (Selinker and Han 1996: 1). However, statements by Selinker himself (1993: 16), such as the following, have contributed to ambiguity in the field:

Fossilized ILs exist no matter what learners do in terms of further exposure to the TL...
... it is nonetheless very difficult, if not impossible, to tell ... if a learner's stabilized IL is in fact fossilized.

There is a lack of agreement in the fossilization field about the variable performance which is a hallmark of second language development (Lardiere 2005: 178). The presence in the interlanguage of a body of errors which does not increase or decrease over time is seen as a precursor of fossilization (Han 2004a: 102). A variety of terms has been employed for the commonly observed phenomenon that erroneous forms and their correct versions appear randomly in interlanguage: fossilized variation (Schachter 1996), permanent optionality (Sorace 1996), permanent indeterminate knowledge (Johnson et al 1996), and long-lasting free variation (R. Ellis 1999) (cited in Han 2004a: 103). These terms have all been disputed by fossilization theorists; Long, for one, has objected that language which contains unstable, randomly variable and unpredictable elements cannot possibly be called stable or fossilized (Long 2003: 511). Criticisms like these provide a rationale for Bierbaumer's objection (1997: 4) that the term fossilization does not adequately describe the phenomena it purports to denote.

The current main problems are summarized by Han as a lack of a unified definition, and inadequate empirical description. However, she points out that the many perspectives and orientations which have emerged have changed the original monolithic concept of fossilization as 'failure' to one including multiple manifestations of SLA difficulties and obscurities (2004a: 168). Acknowledgement of the expanded scope of the concept has also brought more sophistication to
empirical studies, such as delineating more carefully the linguistic domain within which fossilization is investigated, examining the nature of the L2 to which the learner is exposed, and identifying the nature of the L2 which he is aspiring to emulate.

There is general agreement in the field on some points. Fossilization is broadly accepted as involving premature cessation of linguistic development, which manifests itself as strongly resistant and persistent erroneousness. There is also consensus about viewing fossilization as a *local* rather than a *global* phenomenon; items or areas of fossilization may be identified in a learner’s interlanguage or idiolect even though in other areas there may be observable progress towards standard norms of the TL, which shows that interlanguage is unstable, and that the term ‘fossilized language’ is therefore inaccurate (Han 2004a: 22). Researchers have become more careful in distinguishing between stabilization and its extreme form, fossilization, and are also taking more care in establishing the presence of fossilization before attempting to analyze the phenomenon.

It is now generally agreed that stabilization cannot be ascribed to one factor alone. It sets in when two or more variables are working negatively against the acquisition process, which substantiates the validity of the multiple effects principle which Selinker and Lakshmanan formulated in 1992. Current pronouncements view the second language acquisition process as a confluence of many variables; in the words of Larsen-Freeman: ‘... no one of these [many interacting factors] by itself is a determining factor; the interaction of them, however, has a very profound effect’ (1997: 151); and she advocates more appropriate research designs (p 159):

because the behaviour of a whole complex nonlinear system is not built into any one of its components, it is self-defeating to examine in isolation a part of the whole in order to learn how the whole operates. However, it is not easy to imagine how one might go about studying the whole of SLA. Thus, it seems we need a way to focus on an individual aspect while respecting the complexity of the whole.

### 2.5 Implications for research

An empirical investigation of fossilization is a daunting undertaking, because there is no universally acknowledged definition or explanation of the phenomenon or of what constitutes suitable empirical demonstration of it (Fidler 2006: 398, 400). Perspectives differ widely on how the concept is to be operationalized in empirical investigation (Fidler 2006: 403), and some theorists even reject the concept entirely. Nevertheless, in spite of the lack of agreement
amongst leading fossilization theorists and researchers on many points, and the resultant contrasting perspectives, it seems clear that when undertaking fossilization research the following points should be observed if the research is to be meaningful to the field of SLA.

The researcher must make sure that the conditions on which fossilization is premised are present in the acquisition situation which is being investigated, so that what is identified as fossilization is indeed that. Continuous acquisition efforts and/or exposure to TL input (structured or unstructured) must be taking place, to show that the opportunity to progress is present in the learner's situation.

Secondly, as there have been many calls to rethink the native-speaker norms by which second language acquisition is too often judged as failed or insufficient, the researcher should carefully consider the norm(s) he or she will be applying in identifying fossilization and its causes. Are they to be researcher-determined or learner-determined? Should the standards which the researcher applies be identical to the standards to which the subject is aspiring?

Thirdly, considering Selinker's verdict that the fossilization literature is 'widespread and diffuse' (Selinker 1993: 14), the researcher should carefully consider the theoretical approach which informs his or her empirical focus. Appropriate assessment norms cannot be clearly defined if the researcher's theoretical perspective is unclear, therefore it is necessary to formulate the standards used in empirical enquiry and to articulate the rationale behind them.

The researcher should also specify the linguistic domain(s) within which persistent errors are investigated so as to keep the modular nature of fossilization in focus and not to mistake partial lack of progress for global lack of progress.

Finally, in determining the cause(s) of any fossilization which is identified, the researcher should investigate as wide a range of variables as possible, thereby, as Larsen-Freeman advocates (1997: 159), respecting the complexity of the whole (SLA) while focusing on one aspect of it (fossilization).
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes how the subject for this research study was identified. The methods employed in obtaining linguistic and extra-linguistic data for purposes of analysis are explained, after which the methods and criteria applied in establishing the presence of fossilized linguistic items or structures in the subject's conversational output are discussed. A detailed profile of the subject containing facts relevant to his acquisition situation is presented lastly (statements made by the subject are printed in italics).

3.2. Research methods

3.2.1. Identification of a subject

As Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 320) observe, the (single) case 'is not selected for its own intrinsic interest, but for what it can tell the researcher in terms of the research questions posed and the questions which will emerge during the course of the research'.

The researcher made the acquaintance of the subject, a middle-aged Syrian male, at a social event held at a public venue in Al Ain, a city in the United Arab Emirates. The researcher soon formed the impression that his English contained instances of fossilization. Although he appeared to be sociable and willing to communicate, he seemed embarrassed when speaking English and responded monosyllabically to enquiries about his country. Some weeks later, through the mediation of a mutual acquaintance, he volunteered to be the subject of this research as far as time and opportunity allowed.

He expressed his respect for and willingness to assist in academic enquiry, and also welcomed it as an opportunity for him to 'practise English'. However, he requested that, as he does not follow an entirely orthodox Muslim lifestyle and his name is one of the ninety-nine holy adjectives used to exalt Allah, his full name not be used, only his initial (N).

3.2.2. Elicitation of data

The subject declined to submit written English for research purposes, as his acquisition endeavours are focused on listening and speaking skills. It was therefore decided to limit
empirical data to conversational output only. One recorded monologue and eight recorded conversations between the subject and the researcher form the main body of data reported on in this study. The conversations were loosely structured by occasional questions from the researcher. As the focus of the research was the absence of progress (fossilization) in conversational proficiency, the recordings were made at more or less regular intervals from April 2006 to January 2007, as the subject’s schedule allowed, and these are presented in chronological order in Appendix B (B1 to B9). The recordings were made at the home of a mutual acquaintance so as to be more convenient for the subject in terms of proximity to his office. The recorded data were transcribed by the researcher and checked against the tapes by a colleague, an English L2 lecturer in the UAE.

In eliciting oral output from a research subject, the researcher is faced with what Labov identified in 1972 as the ‘observer’s paradox’ (cited in Nunan 1992: 63): the aim is to find out how people behave when they are not being systematically observed, but such data can only be obtained through systematic observation. At first the subject was rather nervous about his English being recorded for academic scrutiny, therefore he requested at least two preliminary meetings during which unrecorded social conversation could take place. These meetings were used as opportunities for making the subject feel at ease by showing sympathetic interest in his personal and learning situation, hoping thereby to reduce the effect of the ‘observer’s paradox’: conversation which takes place in a relaxed and sympathetic spirit tends to be more natural and spontaneous, as awareness of the interlocutor’s academic scrutiny and of the presence of a tape recorder may thereby be lessened. This shows that personal considerations already come into play in the data elicitation process, and that the researcher has to be careful to influence behaviour as little as possible.

The ‘Hawthorn effect’, the phenomenon in which temporary behavioural change is caused by the introduction of a new element (such as observation) into a learning situation (Richards and Schmidt 2002: 236), also has to be considered during the elicitation process. Conversations were therefore loosely structured so that the researcher did not appear to control or manipulate the proceedings unduly, and care was taken to ensure that the subject felt free to converse naturally on topics mostly chosen by himself. The researcher made field notes discreetly during conversation sessions and/or directly after each meeting.
The preliminary unrecorded sessions were also used to obtain data about the subject's life history relevant to his learning of English and his current acquisition situation, and to form an impression of his general cognitive-academic aptitude. As he is a well-educated and knowledgeable professional person, it was not thought necessary to use any formal measures of aptitude to ascertain his general level of intellectual ability. He is an adroit user of his first language and has intellectual interests; linguistic aptitude is evidenced by the fact that he regularly completes the cryptic crossword puzzles in the local Arabic newspapers. Therefore, aptitude as a variable which may have contributed to fossilized linguistic outcomes was ruled out.

Sociocultural issues should also be considered during the data elicitation process. In order to observe the subject engaging in social conversation, the researcher accompanied him on a few occasions to public places, including to a gathering of Syrian compatriots in an Arabic coffee shop. This was attended only by males, as Arabic women do not generally frequent these establishments, where men tend to spend hours over Turkish coffee and sheesha pipes. The subject felt obliged to explain the presence of the researcher to his friends, also because he is a married man. None of those present were fluent English speakers; although they were polite, the researcher felt somewhat awkward as an observer of the situation, but managed to blend in unobtrusively and stay long enough to form a realistic idea of the subject's conversational skills in his first language (or 'home dialect': Syrian Arabic). The researcher felt afterwards that attending this gathering may have been inappropriate.

The subject brought learning materials to the sessions to show the researcher what and how he had been studying. It was also his suggestion to record a monologue by himself as a form of unobserved practice, in order to familiarize himself with the equipment, and in order to listen critically to his own English speech. When he felt confident to proceed, the first recording was attempted. This was unsuccessful due to mechanical failure; one of his acquaintances then provided audio-recording equipment of a better quality.

3.2.3 Data analysis methods

Since the aim of this research was to identify fossilization in linguistic output, the linguistic data samples were organized chronologically to give a clear picture of the subject's progress over the nine-month period. The transcripts are attached as Appendix B and numbered B1 to B9, in the order in which they were recorded.
The data were examined in order to identify persistent faultiness in linguistic aspects of the subject's conversation over the research period. No attempt at intervention was made; fossilization was not approached as erroneous linguistic elements resistant to 'artifical' intervention (meaning the kind of intervention which would not occur in his learning situation) but as erroneous linguistic elements which persisted in spite of his sustained acquisition efforts and continued exposure to the TL. This approach accords with Larsen-Freeman's opinion (1997: 158) that we should not rely on simple pre-test/post-test designs to measure language gains, or more specifically in this case, to measure 'permanence' in language. In the areas which were investigated, the subject was continually and actively studying, adding new knowledge, revising his materials, and practising his skills in private and in public, following the strategies outlined in Section 3.3.4 below. Acquisition was thus ongoing throughout the observation period.

In order to examine the subject's interlanguage more closely, it was decided to focus on erroneousness in five domains: morphology, syntax, vocabulary, phonology, and compensatory communicative strategies. Analysis of each domain was necessarily limited, as the scope of this dissertation did not allow for extensive in-depth investigation of all five areas. The choice of items or structures focused on in each area was determined by their repeated erroneous appearance in output and was also guided by what was investigated in the fossilization studies listed in Section 1.6.3.

The research aimed to combine elements of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It took the format which Grotjahn classifies as 'Paradigm 1' in his 1987 taxonomy of research designs in Applied Linguistics (cited in Nunan 1992: 6), in that it combined a non-experimental design with qualitative data and interpretive analysis. However, where logically possible, erroneous usage of discrete items in each of the nine recordings was quantified, percentages were presented in table form, and histogram representations of these outcomes were supplied to provide an immediate visual impression of statistics in each area. Quantifying was done to accommodate the definition of fossilization (see Section 3.2.4. below) as permanently and predominantly erroneous linguistic forms. In the areas of syntax and phonology, quantification and description of errors were combined or alternated. The most noticeably faulty lexical items were listed chronologically to determine whether they had become, or were becoming, fossilized.

In keeping with the dictates of the communicative paradigm, and because the subject's main acquisition aim is conversational proficiency, investigation of the subject's reliance on
compensatory communicative strategies during conversation was included. Whereas a strategy such as circumlocution may occasionally prove helpful to the SL learner when communicating in his/her second language, it may become entrenched over time as a linguistic 'bad habit': if a learner constantly succeeds in conveying his/her message using compensatory strategies, the need to augment linguistic competence may seem superfluous, thereby causing stagnation and promoting fossilization.

### 3.2.4. Fossilization criteria employed

Considering the many idiosyncratic approaches to the phenomenon in theory and research, the cardinal question is: what constitutes evidence of fossilization? The metaphor implies, and most definitions of the concept indicate, that *permanence* is the ontologically decisive descriptor, which would seem to indicate that linguistic fossilization should manifest itself as 100% erroneous suppliance of an item or structure over a period of time. Fidler (2006: 400) points out, however, that in the product perspective (diagnosing fossilization in observable output) there is no consensus that fossilization must indicate a *total* lack of change or variability of interlanguage, and in the process perspective (viewing fossilization as an underlying competence defect), measurability is seriously compromised. Jung (2002: 16) has the following to say:

> To make any decisive claims [about fossilization], it would be necessary to demonstrate that the fossilized item in question has completely ceased developing towards the L2 norm. However, this would require the researcher analyzing the learner's performance over a sufficient length of time, ideally from the moment of observation of a fossilized item until the learner’s death ...

Protestations such as these are dismissed by Han (2004a: 22) as arising from simplistic phenomenological perspectives. Vigil and Oller's oxymoronic 1976 definition of fossilization as a 'relatively permanent' linguistic phenomenon (1976: 282) has taken root in the SLA field, as H.D. Brown's definition of the phenomenon shows (2000: 231): 'The relatively permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into a person's second language competence'. But what is 'relative permanence', and how can it be measured? No definite answer is available in the fossilization field; therefore, in spite of being aware that such a definition blurs the line between temporary and permanent, 'relative permanence' was employed by this researcher as the most suitable descriptor available and was interpreted to mean 'unchanged throughout the period of research'. Thus, linguistic items which appeared in incorrect form throughout the period of data
gathering (100% erroneous suppliance), with no evidence of their correct forms present in the
subject’s repertoire, were identified as fossilized errors.

The abstract noun fossilization, when used in the natural sciences, may denote either the
process of ‘turning into stone’ or the observed outcome of ‘having turned into stone’; by analogy,
it was decided for the purposes of this research to label erroneous forms of which the correct
forms were also present in the subject’s output, but which outnumbered their correct versions, as
fossilizing errors; by using the present and the past participle forms to distinguish between
becoming and being, it was hoped that empirical clarity would be maintained. This distinction
between fossilized and fossilizing errors was also prompted by Selinker’s rather pessimistic
statement (1993: 16) that ‘... it is nonetheless very difficult, if not impossible, to tell ... if a
learner’s stabilized IL is in fact fossilized.’ (1993: 16).

In summary, the following criteria were employed in this research:

- deviant forms of the target language were seen as errors;
- errors which persisted throughout the period of observation with no evidence of their
correct forms present in the subject’s linguistic repertoire were identified as fossilized;
- errors of which the correct versions were also present in the subject’s linguistic repertoire
were seen as evidence of interlanguage instability; if the erroneous form of the error
appeared more often than the correct form, this was seen as evidence that the error was
fossilizing.
- standards used in determining whether errors impeded accuracy, fluency, and message-
delivery combined the norm targeted by the subject – I will try to speak English good, to
be understand by the other / I learn words ... to say better my meaning (in other words,
intelligibility) – with the norms which the researcher, being a native speaker and an
experienced ESL teacher and, of course, the co-constructeur of meaning during the
conversations, would commonly apply in judging whether output is intelligible.

3.3. Profile of the subject

Mindful of Moyer’s plea that SLA research should ‘try harder to account for ... complexities’ by
examining outcomes in late learning in tandem with the learner’s cumulative experience (2004:
147-148), and of the view that language acquisition is a socially situated phenomenon (Kramsch
2001: 11), the following profile of the subject was compiled from information volunteered during
conversations. Personal and extra-personal facts related to his L2 acquisition situation were taken into account when the causes of fossilized and fossilizing outcomes were explored. Descriptions of the following are presented in the same order in this section: a brief biography of the subject, the history of his formal instruction in English, his motives for learning the language, the learning strategies which he is following, and his current acquisition environment.

3.3.1. Biography

The subject of this study is a Syrian national aged 47 who is currently living and working as an architect in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in the UAE. He was born and raised in a village called Sarakeb near the city of Aleppo in Syria. He attended the primary and secondary schools in his village, after which he graduated from the University of Aleppo as an architect. Except for a period of two years with an engineering company in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), in the 1990s, he worked in his home region until he came to the UAE four years ago, where he is now working as an architect for a private firm. He is married and has six children.

3.3.2. Formal instruction in English

The subject received instruction in English as a foreign language throughout his five years at secondary school. An additional language course was compulsory, and he chose the English course instead of the French course because of personal anti-France sentiments: *I choose English because I did not like the French people, how they use before of our country. The first year's lessons focused on learning the English writing system, spelling and pronunciation, and thereafter the course focused on memorizing vocabulary and learning grammar rules: we learn too much grammar ... and explain everything in Arabic. Instruction was teacher-centred, delivered in the medium of Arabic, as the teachers were nonnative speakers from Arabic countries: teachers in English in Syria not good, because they learn English not correct, learn from Arab school or places / in my school in Syria we talk English little / only little classes, simple books. There were no opportunities for communication with native English speakers: there isn't any people, foreign people who meet them in the street to talk with them. Very little English reading material was available in the school and town libraries and the village bookshops, and the only source of English-medium cultural material were radio programmes, music and occasional films with Arabic subtitles at the local cinemas.*
By his own admission the subject's attitude to acquiring English was one of indifference: *I learn, but I didn't understand what I learn, I mean, not give my attention, my mind, just accept to have that, will finish and leave that study / I look at her and listen her voice but not accept her knowledge too much.* The course was compulsory, the students found the beginner/elementary-level material childish and unstimulating (*simple books / we talk little English ... from simple books*) and at the time English did not seem at all relevant to his future. He received no English-medium instruction during his four years at Aleppo University.

The subject did not apply himself seriously to improving his proficiency in English, something he ascribes to youthful immaturity: *Yes, I am sorry to say, young boy is like animal, have no mind, just feel about himself... but every boy will grow to become a man, and will begin think, to think about this life.* However, he achieved good results in English examinations, which he ascribes to his natural intelligence, the unchallenging nature of the examinations, and the general examination-centred nature of the education system at the time: *But I was a good student, and study hard for that exam every time, and get easy remarks, high remarks.* As often happens with language learning, he was convinced that he had forgotten most of what he had learned about English at school because he neither used nor was exposed to English in the following two decades. Nevertheless, his school instruction did have a lasting legacy: he had learned how to read English (or the Roman script), and he had acquired a basic understanding of the grammar of the language: *I learn little English in the school. That not much. But I remember later some of that when I begin to study her again.* His school instruction thus laid the foundation on which he was able to build further when later circumstances required greater proficiency in English.

3.3.3. Motivation for learning

Spolsky (2000: 160) reports on his scepticism about using only direct instruments such as questionnaires to measure the extent and nature of motivation in SLA, which he views as an extremely complex phenomenon. He came to favour the use of discursive (or indirect) methods of identifying learners' motives, and relates (p 160) that he discussed this matter with Wallace Lambert in the summer of 1968:

> He thought [the indirect instrument] reasonable, but went on to say that the best way to learn about someone's integrative motivation was probably to sit quietly and chat with him over a bottle of wine for an evening.
Although 'a bottle of wine' did not feature in conversations conducted for this research, a comprehensive idea of what motivates the subject's language-learning efforts was formed from statements made during friendly, relaxed conversations.

During the first three decades of his life the subject never spoke English socially to anyone. When he went to work in Saudi Arabia at the age of 35 he encountered a work environment in which Asian and Arabic colleagues communicated in Arabic, English and Urdu, and sometimes a mixture of all three languages. Some English computer materials and terminology were being used: *I begin to read or translate from my work other things, from that library, for my job, like names of materials, building specifications, to measure, plannings.* As he sometimes socialized after work with foreign colleagues, he started to feel that he needed to acquire more English. His consequent acquisition endeavours were focused on work-related topics in the building design and construction field and on relevant computer programs, and the general desire to be able to communicate socially in English: *I feel that not correct to every time someone must come, to help, to translate for me and that engineer everything.*

When he left Saudi Arabia to return to Syria, he felt that he had gained some confidence because he had become more proficient in English, but he realized that he was still a limited speaker of the language. The environment in Syria again did not necessitate the use of English. By then some of his children were learning English at school; he started to help them with their English homework and continued to study architecture-related computer material. The current president of Syria had lived and worked in London for ten years, and according to the subject the general attitude towards Western cultures had by then become more relaxed. When he arrived in the UAE four years ago he soon realised that the cosmopolitan nature of his work and social environment necessitated some upgrading of his English proficiency: *But when I came to Emirates, suddenly I need more of English, not too much, but engineers Indian, Philippino, maybe Iran.*

Some of his Arabic colleagues had studied and/or worked in the UK, USA or Canada and are fluent English speakers who enjoy speaking English at work (although all design and planning work is finalised in Arabic); peer influence can thus also be said to have contributed to his current learning efforts in English.
He admires the scientific, technological and other achievements of the English-speaking world: English language have strong position in the life, useful, prevail of many things, computer, films, technology, knowledge of ... to understand [politics]. American influence has grown in the Middle East, and the UAE infrastructure is presented in English and Arabic; he has therefore become convinced that greater proficiency in English will be to his advantage.

The subject also expressed an initial sense of loneliness in the UAE environment; as he does not follow an orthodox Muslim lifestyle and often frequents social establishments where English-speaking patrons predominate, he felt the need to improve his English: They good, very nice, I see friendly / I needed someone to talk with him ... but English language is very difficult for me, because I didn’t meet a lot of people in this country at this time, so I need to teach English / I listen ... hear those English and Americans talk, sometimes hallo, hallo, how are you, but sorry I couldn’t speak more. He also admires the relaxed social manner of the Western expatriates, and especially the equal public socializing of men and women, which is frowned upon in Islamic society.

The subject’s eldest son is currently completing his medical studies at Aleppo University and is applying for a scholarship to specialize in cardiology in Texas, USA. His son has achieved the required score on the TOEFL (one of the USA university admission criteria) and is currently taking a course in medical English. The subject is very proud and supportive of his son and has expressed the desire to visit him in America one day; he hopes to be able to speak English more fluently so that his son will in turn be proud of him.

It is clear that the subject’s attitude to the English language itself is fundamentally positive (I like English / I think it have, it has nice sound, friendly sound. More soft of Arabic) and that his opinion of native speakers is also favourable. His motivation combines what Gardner and Lambert identified in 1972 as instrumental (career-related) and integrative (socially orientated) dimensions (Brown 2000: 162), as well as an affective dimension (his paternal love and the wish to support his son). The subject can also be said to be intrinsically motivated, as defined by Deci (1975, cited in Brown 2000: 164):

Intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences; namely, feelings of competence and self-determination.
However, it is clear that he does not aim to achieve the highest proficiency possible (I need more of English, not too much) and that his identity is solidly rooted in his Arabic culture: I am Arabic man, Sunni, North Syria, Aleppo. He also has no wish to cultivate an authentic English accent: why I will sound like other man / I will try to speak English good, to be understand by the other / so I happy to give sound of Arab.

3.3.4. Learning strategies

The following acquisition strategies were articulated by the subject:

- studying a beginner's grammar manual: I bought a simple [grammar] book from the market and begin to teach English from the first letter. I tried too much / begin to make sentences, not same for my work / I decide to learn more, how make the long sentences and story, like now I speak to you;

- repeating and memorizing words and structures: I read, copy, say loud sound many time the same thing, to remember it / write some words to see if I can remember what, what I see before my eyes when I study;

- using listening material: Hugo's English Simplified: An Elementary Course for Foreign Students: 1983, Suffolk: one textbook and two cassettes which are described as 'up-to-date in concept, method and contents, and presupposes that you have a little knowledge of the language to begin with' on the box cover; old TOEFL (the American college-level English foreign language proficiency test) listening cassettes;

- studying English computer programs with the help of Arabic explanatory manuals: I see and study from computer programs but I cannot say that is good for to learn grammar correct;

- translating work-related Arabic terminology into English with the aid of dictionaries and technical manuals: sometimes I read some English from office, some things, papers;

- watching English television programmes: I listen sound how they speak and say those words every time / sometimes I sit with Z and we look news, maybe CNN or Fox, also not understand all but I like sound, I learn sound, of their talking / when I see what happening, as bombs in Iraq, I understand what they talk but not every word;

- listening to the radio: sometimes I listen to Radio 101, that English from Dubai;
• speaking English with colleagues: *I speak little and more with engineers in the work;*

• listening to native-speakers’ conversations: *I listen when I go to Trader Vic’s, hear those English and Americans talk;*

• studying a more advanced grammar textbook (*Adam’s Comprehensive Grammar for the Arab Learner*, Cairo, 1987: see Appendix C for table of contents) after having worked through his beginner’s textbook: *I take from library very nice, very good book for understand the English grammar better. It begin with sentence: how to make a sentence / how to ask question / to tell him or her what to do / too much about verb, tenses, but I like that, I feel I understand how the English language working / I like to understand, then, now, I slowly learn more words, to say better my meaning;*

• reading elementary literature in English: *I read ... some simple easy books as for babies / I read from Grimms brothers, many stories ... and like very much how these stories, how telling;*

• reading English newspapers: *sometimes, yes, I look to see newspapers, but the English is too difficult;*

• studying written signs in the streets (traffic signals, names of businesses, notices in windows): *I like to read in the street, names, shops, banks, that signs of names and all Arabic, to see how same in English.*

• Engaging in English conversation, as far as possible, in public.

The subject was advised by a friend to join evening classes at a private English institution in Al Ain in order to improve his conversational skills. He found the fees unreasonably high — *I see that those people thief other people, other people who need some English but how you can pay so much, what is this — and when he found out that the teacher and the other enrolled students were all young people, he decided against joining: *How I can sit with young boys if I grandfather? What I will talk with them and to make mistakes and maybe they think what this old man sit with us / what I will sit and talk with young people.* The permeable language ego and fear of risk-taking evidenced by these statements is perhaps understandable considering the large age gap between him and the other course-goers. The subject prefers to learn by himself, to structure his own learning experiences and to investigate what he decides is important for him to know. His dislike of communal learning (*a group, that is not good for me*) points to a field-independent learning style. His focus on grammar and analysis (*I kept knowledge about the*
English language / I take good book for understand the English grammar better / I understand how looking, looked the English language, maybe same you understand her) substantiates the widely accepted conviction that adult language learners tend to rely mostly on their intellectual or cognitive powers.

However, it must be said that the studying of the Arabic language in the Middle East is dominated by grammar learning, and that this must have influenced the subject’s attitude to studying English. All Arabic speakers acquire three forms of their language (triglossia): the regional dialect, known as Colloquial Arabic, spoken at home and in the community (such as the Tunisian, Moroccan, Syrian, Gulf, Lebanese and Egyptian varieties, each with a distinct accent, pronunciation and a certain amount of unique vocabulary); Modern Standard Arabic (the formal Arabic used in the media, the academic world and other public spheres), and Classical or Literary Arabic (the language of the Qur’an, liturgy and classical literature). Two speakers of mutually semi-unintelligible dialects (for example, Syrian and Moroccan) are normally able to ‘bridge the gaps’ with Classical Arabic. The latter is taught in schools and necessitates the acquisition of a higher register than that which is used in everyday speech, and the learning of formulaic structures. Arabic is a highly inflected language, therefore language courses entail robust grammar study and practising of correct forms (personal communication: Dr Hassan Al Malki, Arabic lecturer, Abu Dhabi).

It is clear that the subject combines learning strategies from the three categories identified by O’Malley et al (1985: 852-854): metacognitive strategies (such as planning, selecting and evaluating learning), cognitive strategies (such as translating, repeating, resourcing, note-taking, deduction, recombining, elaboration), and socio-affective strategies (learning by engaging with other speakers and users of the language). The tenets on which Knowles (1984) premised his theory of andragogic (adult-centred) education can also be observed: the subject’s learning is purposely self-directed and he chooses his own goals and methods; his reservoir of previous knowledge (such as his mastery of the Arabic language) is used as a resource for his present learning (using Arabic explanations to understand English grammar); his learning is orientated towards his social roles (colleague, friend, father) and towards solving problems presented by circumstances (social and professional communication difficulties); his motivation to become more proficient in English has become internal and not, as was the case when he was an adolescent, dominated by the achievement of goals set by a compulsory course.
3.3.5. Acquisition environment

The subject combines self-directed learning with learning from naturalistic input. The UAE is characterized by the cosmopolitan nature of its population; residents from nearly 200 countries live and work in the country (Alafrangi 2006). According to the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, the 2005 population census revealed that eight out of ten people living in the UAE were born abroad; the director of the ECSSR, Dr Jamal Al Suwaidi, has expressed concern that this demographic imbalance has led to a multicultural 'salad platter society' in which globalization is destroying traditional Gulf Arab societal values (Alafrangi 2006). The official language of the UAE is Arabic, but the majority of residents in the country do not speak it; Iranian, Indian, other Asian, and Western expatriates are more numerous than Arabs. The major lingua franca of the country is English, of which most residents have at least a basic command; other languages widely spoken in the UAE include Farsi (Persian), Hindi, Urdu, Malayam, and Tagalog (Alafrangi 2006). The linguistic diversity is exemplified by a recent list of Easter services held in St Mary's Catholic Church in Dubai, which included times for services in Malayam, Konkani, Urdu, Sinhalese, Tamil, Tagalog, English, Arabic and French (notice in Gulf News: 6 April 2007). One mosque in Abu Dhabi is now broadcasting the Friday noon sermon in English from its minarets.

However, the assumption that there is widespread social integration of the different language and culture groups is questioned (Alafrangi 2006). In a recent survey the overwhelming majority of respondents said that they had come to the UAE to earn more money; beyond working hours, where many feel they are pushed to communicate with persons from a variety of different backgrounds, most respondents prefer to socialize with those who share their national, linguistic and cultural background, so that segregated mini-communities are formed. Language is seen by many as a barrier to cross-cultural integration; many Muslims view the Western lifestyle, which tends to revolve around clubs, partying and the consumption of alcohol, in a negative light, and therefore prefer not to socialize with native English-speakers outside the workplace. According to a Filipino respondent, 'If someone has a Western accent, they give the impression that their mentality is more Western as well.' Some respondents expressed resentment at perceived Western chauvinistic attitudes, and at the institutionalized discrepancy in remuneration between native English-speakers and non-native English speakers.

Nevertheless, English is the language of practical communication amongst the majority of residents. Roughly half of the employees in the subject's workplace are native speakers of Arabic,
and the other half comprises Indians, Philippinos, Iranians, and Sri Lankans. Most of the non-Arabic speakers are familiar with Arabic to some extent; key personnel in the office must ensure that all work is finalized in Arabic, as the municipal and governmental departments that must be liaised with operate only in Arabic. English is often spoken, as some of the subject’s Arabic colleagues are fluent English speakers, having studied or worked in English-speaking countries.

Pidginized English is heard everywhere in public in the UAE and is characterized by reduced grammar, simplified syntax and lexis, and words from other languages (Richards and Schmidt 2002: 401-402). The following scenario is typical: in a large department store (KM Trading, Abu Dhabi) the manager is Sri Lankan, the floor assistants and cashiers are Philippine, Chinese, Russian, Arabic and African, and the customers are of a multitude of linguistic backgrounds. Everyone communicates in simplified English, and intelligibility problems are dealt with by calling on anyone present who is able to assist in clarifying, to do so.

The subject is at ease in a lingua franca situation and has no difficulty understanding and making himself understood to others when conversations centre on practical matters such as buying or ordering something, or asking for information or instructions; communication is often aided by gesturing, pointing or mimicking. The subject mostly socializes with Arabic speakers; he has found that although highly proficient target-language speakers may be welcoming, friendly, and sympathetic about his limited command of English, he cannot keep up with normally paced conversations and therefore is not able to contribute much to such conversations. From observing the subject socializing with Syrian compatriots, it is clear that he is a highly articulate and talented conversationalist. In his own words: in Arabic I not a simple man – but English, I become like the baby.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the investigation of the recorded conversational output of the subject and identifies the factors which contributed to fossilization.

4.2. Analysis of linguistic data

Five aspects of the subject's linguistic output were analysed in order to determine the presence of fossilization: morphology, syntax, vocabulary, phonology, and compensatory communicative strategies.

4.2.1. Morphology

Levels of accuracy in the use of five basic grammatical morphemes commonly studied in SLA acquisition research were examined. Accuracy was calculated as the percentage of correct suppliance in obligatory contexts in each of the nine recordings, and these were tabled chronologically as B1 – B9. The following five morphemes were examined: a) Simple Past tense inflection of principal or main verbs; b) inflection of the copula be in all tenses; c) inflection of three modal verbs in all tenses; d) the use of definite and indefinite articles; and e) pronominal inflection (genitive, dative and objective cases) of the third person singular.

4.2.1.1. Simple Past tense inflection

Past tense narratives and anecdotes predominated in the subject's performance; and as verb conjugation forms a large part of his learning efforts, it was decided to focus on his proficiency in inflecting principal verbs in Simple Past tense contexts. Errors included incorrect morphological forms and omission of the verb, but not cases of errors due to overgeneralisation (because if instances in which the verb was not called for but was used are counted as errors, one should logically have to include all instances in which the verb could have been inserted erroneously but was not, and should then count these as correct suppliances). Obligatory contexts were determined by the sentential and paragraphic context or inferred from the semantic logic of the utterance. Ambiguous contexts, in which a different tense or a verb omission may have been acceptable, were disregarded. The verbs acknowledged were principal verbs in positive and
negative forms and in the indicative and interrogative moods, and included verbs followed by the gerundial infinitive (such as begin to, start to, decide to).

Table 1: Correct suppliance of Simple Past tense in obligatory contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>transcript</th>
<th>obligatory contexts / correct suppliance</th>
<th>% of correct suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>106 / 42</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>23 / 7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>31 / 5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>30 / 6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>51 / 8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>50 / 5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>52 / 11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>59 / 22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>72 / 17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many SLA researchers have equated successful acquisition with 90% appearance in obligatory contexts (Ushioda 1993: 31); however, Lardiere (1998: 4) quotes Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1990) as asserting that a mean correct suppliance rate (of verb agreement) of 60% indicates successful acquisition; exact criteria for successful L2 morphological acquisition have therefore not yet been decided. The subject’s mean percentage of correct suppliance was 24%, which shows that Simple Past tense inflection was largely incorrect. Figure 1 shows clearly how accuracy in the use of this grammatical morpheme fluctuated, and that there was no chronological improvement.

Figure 1: Correct suppliance of Simple Past tense conjugation
Long (2003) is of the opinion that fluctuation excludes *permanence* and therefore does not imply fossilization or the onset of fossilization; other authors have compromised with terms such as ‘permanent optionality’ (Sorace: 1996), ‘permanent indeterminate knowledge’ (Johnson et al: 1996), and ‘long-lasting free variation’ (R. Ellis: 1999) (cited in Han 2004a: 103). However, following the criteria set out in Section 3.2.4 above, as more erroneous than correct forms were present in the subject’s output, Simple Past tense inflection was found to be fossilizing, or, in the words of Lennon (1991: 148), a ‘candidate for a fossilizable structure’.

Closer scrutiny reveals that the verb *begin* was not once conjugated correctly throughout the recorded output. The verb *prevail* was conjugated correctly in the first three obligatory contexts and incorrectly in the fourth. The verb *go* was conjugated randomly (if C is used to represent *correctly* and I to represent *incorrectly*, the chronological sequence ICCCICICICIC emerges – altogether five incorrect and six correct instances). Not one verb was conjugated correctly in every context in which it was used. The only fossilized error that could be found in this area of morphology concerned the verb *begin*, which appeared incorrectly without exception.

### 4.2.1.2. Copula *be*

Obligatory contexts for the use of the copula *be* included all tenses, all persons, and affirmative, negative and interrogative forms. Errors and omissions were counted; overgeneralizations and ambiguous contexts were disregarded.

*Table 2: Correct suppliance of the copula *be* in obligatory contexts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcript</th>
<th>obligatory contexts / correct suppliance</th>
<th>% of correct suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>55 / 16</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>22 / 3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>23 / 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>14 / 7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>34 / 13</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>32 / 13</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>17 / 2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>30 / 13</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>26 / 3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*mean: 29%*
On average, the subject supplied the correct form in 28% of opportunities with a range (the difference between the highest and the lowest suppliance percentages) of 41. Clear evidence of 'random grammar' could be seen (her father farmer. But also her father he was ...), in which an omission of the morpheme was immediately followed by the suppliance of the correct form in the repeated structure. The subject's limited ability to supply the copula be correctly over a period of nine months, in spite of his continuous acquisition endeavours in this area of grammar, indicate fossilizing, as he did not achieve a correct suppliance rate of more than 50% in any of the nine conversations.

Figure 2: Correct suppliance of the copula be

As with Simple Past tense conjugation, the results showed fluctuation around a very low correct suppliance rate, and no improvement trend was identifiable (Figure 2). Omission of the copula predominated in erroneous instances (they good / that not correct / it same as).

4.2.1.3. Modal verbs

This aspect of morphological proficiency was analysed by quantifying the rate of correct suppliance in obligatory contexts of the modal verbs can, must, and will in all tenses, positive and negative forms, as well as in interrogative structures. Care was taken in ascertaining obligatory contexts; will may also appear as a future tense auxiliary verb (He will pay me tomorrow). The verb will was only counted when it was used to express immediate intention (OK, I will tell you), habitual action (they will fill their tanks from the cheap one) and factual information (If you will meet one you will not meet him long time because it is a big city). Ambiguous contexts and overgeneralisations were disregarded.
Table 3: Correct suppliance of modal verbs in obligatory contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>transcript</th>
<th>obligatory contexts / correct suppliances</th>
<th>% of correct suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>41 / 9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>8 / 4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>10 / 8</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>16 / 8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>25 / 19</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>17 / 9</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>5 / 2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>12 / 9</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>8 / 4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

mean: 53%

Although the mean rate of suppliance was considerably higher than the mean rates of suppliance of Simple Past tense marking and the use of the copula be, it was still well below what would generally be considered as indicating satisfactory acquisition of a grammatical morpheme. Significant fluctuation was shown by a range of 54 in suppliance rates, which reflected the random use of grammatical and ungrammatical options. The fact that the modal verb must was not once conjugated correctly in any past tense context (the rent was about five hundred ... and I must buy water every three days) contributed significantly to the low rate of correct suppliance, and especially so in Transcript B1, where it was used 20 times in past contexts.

Figure 3: Correct suppliance of modal verbs
It would appear that the subject was unaware of the past tense form of must. This underscores one of the conundrums in fossilization enquiry: does complete non-suppliance of a morpheme or its obligatory inflection signify that the subject has acquired the item or the inflectional skill, but is unable to produce or perform it? Should fossilization be ruled out because the item is not yet part of the morphological repertoire? However, according to the criteria formulated in Section 3.2.4, the correct form of this modal verb was not once supplied in obligatory past contexts, therefore this error was found to have fossilized.

4.2.1.4. Articles

In counting errors in article use, all ambiguous contexts were excluded; for example, in relating past accommodation difficulties, the subject said the following: But what I must do ... to solve this problem? I must change the place. The expression is incorrect, but would not have been correct either if the definite article had been omitted. A variety of correct alternatives could have been used: I had to move, I had to find another place, I had to change my accommodation, I needed to change, I needed to get out of the place, or I needed a change of place. Therefore the error was disregarded.

Another example was the following statement (or rhetorical question): Why I will sound like other man. It seems clear that a definite article structure such as the other men or the other people was not meant, but rather other people or another man, or anyone else. In the same context the subject said the following: I will try to speak English good, to be understand by the other, what I can. Again, the intended meaning could have been other people, others, or perhaps the other person; therefore the suppliance of the definite article here was disregarded.

Also, in an utterance such as stories, I think from German, it could not be clearly determined whether the subject had meant from the German, from the German language, or from Germany, therefore it was not included as an article error. Overgeneralisations such as have strong position in the life, I speak a little in the work, simple easy books as for the babies, some facts in the life, full of the beautiful flowers and it become the Arab folklore were not counted, for the same reason as mentioned in paragraph 4.2.1.1 above.
Table 4: Correct suppliance of articles in obligatory contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>transcript</th>
<th>obligatory contexts / correct suppliance</th>
<th>% of correct suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>72 / 40</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>23 / 9</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>57 / 12</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>33 / 15</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>82 / 50</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>53 / 22</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>58 / 27</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>68 / 43</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>58 / 27</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

mean: 47%

Figure 4: Correct suppliance of articles

The low correct suppliance rate (47%) in this area of grammatical competence indicated low proficiency in this area of morphology, and the range of 42 indicated significant fluctuation. Figure 4 shows that there was no trend towards improvement. As the following chronological selection of article usage shows, there was too much variation between correct and incorrect forms to identify any fossilized errors:

*that man is liar*
*he isn't foreign man*
*I was a good student*
*I am not a simple man*
*I am grandfather*
*you are a bad son*
*that is a good story*
that he artist
defective
he is a poor man

Solecistic structures appeared frequently, especially those featuring the word same: she will get
same first wife / not same you read her letters / same you first time when you speak to me / not
same Palmyra, that from Rome / what that, same lighter? / it same English and French, same
letters, I mean same alphabet, not same words ... some ... sound little same. Many article errors
also appeared in comparative structures featuring the word like: young boy is like animal / sitting
like the king / swim like the fish / running like the fox / I become like the baby.

In summary, since erroneous usage of articles far outnumbered correct usage, this aspect of
mophology was identified as fossilizing.

4.2.1.5. Pronouns

Pronominal case marking was investigated by quantifying correct suppliance of genitive, dative
and objective case inflections of the third person singular pronouns (it, its, him, his, her) in
obligatory contexts.

Table 5: Correct suppliance of pronominal inflection in obligatory contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>transcript</th>
<th>obligatory contexts / correct suppliance</th>
<th>% of correct suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>13 / 13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>6 / 6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>6 / 3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>3 / 3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>13 / 5</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>25 / 25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>13 / 12</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>27 / 23</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>7 / 5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

mean: 82%
The subject showed greater proficiency in this area of grammatical competence. There was only one instance of omission. The low rate of suppliance in transcript B5 was caused by the random spread of masculine and feminine referents in referring to the same bird; if this had been treated as one extended error, the rate of correct suppliance in this transcript would have been 4/5, or 80%. This repeated error contributed to the significant fluctuation in outcomes which Figure 5 shows. Other errors included using the masculine objective referent for a bulldozer (*I drive him*) and *her* used as the objective referent for *the English language* after using *it* in the nominative case. Most errors do not point to fossilization: for example, in transcript B8, the correct gender referent for the man being talked about occurred 14 times, therefore the one incorrect gender referent (*her donkey*) was seen as a lapse in concentration (or mistake). The neuter genitive pronoun form *its* was entirely absent from the subject’s output; its complete non-suppliance was the only pronominal inflection error which could be identified as fossilized.

4.2.1.6. Conclusion

Figure 6 clearly shows the disparity in the subject’s productive proficiency in the use of the morphological items examined; only pronominal case inflection, the ‘smallest’ of the five areas of morphology investigated, approached a level of correct usage which would indicate successful acquisition. Errors examined in the other four areas were mostly found to be fossilizing, and none of them could be identified as global errors. Past tense marking and the use of the copula *be* were the most problematic aspects of morphology throughout the observation period.
Figure 6: Comparison of correct suppliance in the five morphological areas

Figure 7 shows that the subject's overall morphological accuracy in conversation fluctuated around a mean of 47% over the nine-month period and that there was no gradual overall improvement of combined morphological skills. Only a few discrete items could be diagnosed as fossilized.

Figure 7: Chronological view of morphological accuracy during conversations
4.2.2. Syntax

The subject's syntactical proficiency in conversation was examined by determining his rate of correct suppliance of three structures: subordinate clauses, Indirect Speech constructions, and Passive Voice constructions.

4.2.2.1. Clauses

The subject's syntactical proficiency in conversation was examined by determining his suppliance rate of correctly constructed embedded sentences ('the occurrence of a sentence within another sentence': Richards and Schmidt 2002: 177), also known as subordinate clauses, which constitute relatively sophisticated structures and therefore demand fairly advanced semantic skills in production. Clauses containing tense and agreement errors were accepted as correct if the syntactical structure of the clause was correct. The subordinate clause in the sentence *I met a man want to open an office as consultant*, for example, was counted as incorrect because all the required syntactical elements were not supplied (the omission of the relative pronoun, an example of parataxis – the arrangement of clauses without connectives – rendered the structure ambiguous); the clause in *a feeling that prevailed of myself* was accepted as correct in spite of the inappropriate reflexive pronoun because the required syntactical elements were present in the correct order.

*Table 6: Rate of suppliance of correctly constructed clauses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>transcript</th>
<th>clauses used / correct clauses</th>
<th>% of correct suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>29 / 14</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>2 / 1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>9 / 5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>7 / 3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>11 / 5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>14 / 6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>9 / 4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>13 / 6</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>6 / 3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>mean: 47%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subordinate clauses were attempted infrequently and the subject invariably constructed them incorrectly. A range of 13 in correct suppliance percentages indicates that fluctuation was not as great in this aspect of linguistic proficiency as in morphological areas; the subject exhibited a
fairly stable level of erroneous clausal syntax in conversation throughout. This area of his conversational syntactical output was found to be fossilizing, as incorrect forms outnumbered correct forms.

4.2.2.2. Indirect speech

Another relatively sophisticated structure with which the subject showed very little familiarity was Reported or Indirect Speech. It is, however, acceptable in informal conversational contexts to use direct quotation rather than indirect constructions; many native English speakers often do this to heighten the effect of a narrative. The subject mostly chose this less sophisticated option, though not successfully in every instance:

he said OK I will help you, just phone to me
I ask him why you didn't fill my tank
then Z say to me, go N
then the family ... say no, if you marry that lady ... you get out of this family, to get no money
my father say Go! Get out!
she said hallo, I come to the [funeral]
I asked him, what you did for police?
I say dog, dog, come, sit here

The subject attempted very few indirect constructions, and these were all syntactically faulty:

I said to the man ... he can fill to me my tank
so I ask Indian engineer, he agree to that and say good, N, you can see mistakes
we ask the police ... that we wanted a cigarette
Dimna ... tell the king that animal came to make this trap for the king
[he] asked many times her father, to she will sing his poems ... then her father say yes
He say no, then begin lessons tomorrow, not this day
I begin tell the mens build house
and she say, give all money for ... poor people

Since the subject produced incorrectly constructed indirect speech structures without exception, this area of syntax was found to be fossilized.
4.2.2.3. Passive Voice

The very few Passive Voice constructions which the subject produced were all erroneous: their language call Farsi / I will try to speak English good, to be understand by the other / that place that called Trader Vic's / they all forgetting, forgot from the people / building from old Europe people. This area of syntax was therefore identified as fossilized. In the following instance, the subject felt it necessary to rephrase his utterance in the Active Voice, showing his lack of confidence in using the Passive Voice: All big plans and king and for whet, they all forgetting ... forgot from the people. I mean to say all the people forget them, forget their big plans.

Concerning syntax in general, the subject mostly reverted to a telegraphic style, in which grammatically simplified or reduced utterances were 'piled up'; necessary grammatical elements such as inflection, conjugation and prepositions were missing, and he frequently resorted to parataxis (the arrangement of clauses without using connectives). The underlying semantic connection thus had to compensate for reduced syntax, yet, as the following sample of sentences illustrate, his utterances were nevertheless intelligible and his meaning not obscured:

- I learn, but I didn't understand what I learn, I mean, not give my attention, my mind, just accept to have that, to study that, will finish and leave that study.
- ... too many times [we went] to this building, near Homs, that near the sea, to see building from old Europe people, not same Palmyra, that from Rome, but for you, to you I could not say ...
- [the stories] they tell us the liar, that from his nature; not this or other reasons, different reasons he is liar, he tell liars. Only we can say his nature.
- I think she did sing only one time for, not Arabic country, she sing in Paris; and so many people, too the tickets for that party, cost too much money, some problems because too many people.
- Yes, I am sorry to say, young boy is like animal, no mind, have no mind, just feel about himself, not feel for other person.
- Yes, when I was young man, young man in the military of Syria, yes we make two years of military work for Syria, I become so boring and nothing to do, sit on the border of Lebanon, there nothing, dry, stones, also some time that Golan we sit, sit, do nothing.
- She went back to Egypt but first make friends with the mother and father of that rich man, this also their grandchildren, children of their son, son died of course, and become to love and visit, I don't know if the two ladies became friends, I think no
• That same paradise you believe, but some things different for us, to have happy life for all time, no more worry this, plan that, finish that thing, galas! Rest, enjoy all things.
• I find died, the bird died, from that horrible cat. And he not eating that bird! Just we can say morderer, not mother to kill for food her babies, yes, morderer...

In summary, his construction of clauses was found to be fossilizing, whereas construction of the Indirect Speech and Passive Voice was 100% erroneous and therefore identified as fossilized.

4.2.3. Vocabulary

The subject displayed a fairly wide lexical range during the conversations, and also showed increased risk-taking in attempting spontaneously introduced topics and not flinching from responding to questions or topic suggestions. He more than once expressed awareness of his limited proficiency in this area: this difficult for me / I will try to talk what I can / I slowly learn more words, more to say better my meaning / [in] English, I become like the baby / your English more nice, more beautiful than of my English. In order to determine the presence or not of fossilization, the use of some noticeably problematic lexemes and their derivatives were examined. In the following chronological tables, I represents incorrect use, C represents correct use, and A represents ambiguous use.

4.2.3.1. The lexeme lie (untruth) and its derivatives

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>I'm sure that man is liar</td>
<td>(noun / present participle?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>those play, and are liars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I'm not liar, that work with the love</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>how he liar too many times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>his liar of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>his clever liars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>the liars of Dimna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>the liar, that from the nature</td>
<td>(gerund/ personal noun/abstract noun?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>not this or other reasons he is liar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>he tell liars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>the king believe all the liars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Kišlī solve the problem with the liars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word liar was used correctly three times and incorrectly seven times, and all errors occurred in the later conversations. Although the personal noun form was used indiscriminately across
parts of speech categories, the subject used it correctly in every instance when referring to an untruthful person. He did not seem to be aware of the existence of the abstract noun form or the verb form, thus his acquisition of this word family appears to be incomplete, and his competence in using this lexical unit in conversation can be said to be erratic and mostly erroneous. Because of complete non-suppliance in spite of proof that he had studied the verb in his grammar textbook, use of impersonal forms of the lexeme lie (verb lie, noun lie, present participle lying), was identified as a fossilized error.

4.2.3.2. The lexeme die and its derivatives

| B5: |  |  
|-----|---|---|
| I   | he is death                        |   |
| C   | he will meet his death             |   |
| I   | he will not be death               |   |
| I   | the animal will death              |   |
| I   | he really death                    |   |
| C   | not to death and killing           |   |
| B6: | C   | we will die                        |   |
| B8: | I   | he dead, suddenly                  |   |
| A   | for the man died                   |   |
| A   | put the human died in the ground   |   |
| A   | if her husband died                |   |
| A   | his son died, of course            |   |
| B9: | I   | I find died, the bird              |   |
| A   | bird died from that cat            |   |
| I   | I know he is died                  |   |
| I   | one day life, next day died        |   |

The subject made use of the verb, abstract noun, adjective and past participle derivatives of the lexeme die, but his usage was only unambiguously correct in three instances. Due to the frequent use of telegraphically constructed or syntactically reduced sentences, the intended meaning could not be clearly inferred from the context in five instances. His proficiency in the use of this lexical unit was erratic, and erroneous usage predominated; there was no perceivable tendency towards improvement over the period of observation, thus the usage of this item of vocabulary was identified as fossilizing.
4.2.3.3. Countries, languages and nationalities

The subject’s accuracy in naming countries and languages as well as in providing their adjectival forms was examined by listing instances chronologically. Countries and nationalities are frequently mentioned in conversations in the UAE, because it is a useful conversation starter (Where are you from?) and a popular topic of conversation in public places, and a section of the subject’s grammar textbook is also devoted to this area of vocabulary.

B1  
C in Syria
C from Iraq
C from Syria
C Arabic word

B2: 
C Arabic
C about America
I British never prevailed
C French or English
C from Lebanon
C from Iraq
I from Arab school
C British mens
C they all English

A American sometimes more
I like American will say
I in British not hear
I I am Arabic man
I why American ... they not
I they all ... Irlanda

B3: 
C in Saudi Arabia
I came to Emirates
C speak little Arabic
C, C, I engineers Indian, Philippino, Iran
C language call Farsi
I Syria man
C English cinema
I from Europe people
I [ruins] from Rome

B4: 
I the queen of British
A stories ... from German
Of the 43 lexical items listed here, 16 (or 37%) are correct. A variety of errors were committed; nouns and adjectives which pertain to the Middle East and to English were mostly correct, while adjective forms in general were problematic. This lexical area was identified as fossilizing.

4.2.3.4. Related verbs: teach and learn

These two common and semantically related verbs were occasionally confused by the subject; however, as the chronological list below indicates, in this case he moved gradually from mostly incorrect usage towards mostly correct usage; no fossilization could be identified.

I never teach English good
I there is not teacher who can learn or teach English good
I I needed to teach English
C I learn little English
C begin to learn words
C now I decide to learn more
C I learn slowly more words
C who will teach me?
C I learn sound of their talking
C I cannot say that is good for to learn grammar correct
C I learn good word ... from Pakistan people
C from these stories the children learn many things
I the stories will learn [them] about some facts in the life
C stories ... to show, to learn, to teach, teach them
4.2.3.5. Semantic errors

Each of the following semantic errors, of which the subject seemed unaware, appeared once during the recorded conversations; and since it was possible to surmise what was meant, they did not impede communication of the overall utterances in which they appeared.

- Marks (for topics)
- remarks (for marks)
- party (for concert)
- walked (for the motion of a bulldozer)

In summary, non-suppliance of the impersonal forms of the lexeme *lie* in obligatory contexts was the only fossilized error that could be identified in this brief investigation of lexical output. The incorrect usage of *die* and its derivatives, and usage of incorrect forms of proper nouns relating to countries and nationalities were identified as fossilizing errors.

4.2.4. Phonology

During conversation the subject articulated the phonological norm which he is pursuing, namely intelligibility to other users of English: *I will try to speak English good, to be understand by the other*. He also made it clear that he does not wish to acquire a native-like accent: *I don't want to sound like Mr Bush or Condi or Tony Blair / why I will sound like other man / why American and British not sound the same / they worry about that? / So I happy to give sound of Arab ... that how I speak English*. He did mimic a British accent quite accurately during conversation to make a humorous point, but with effort; however, whether he is capable or not of attaining a native-like accent and pronunciation is not of real importance here, as he prefers to speak with an Arabic accent.

Judged according to his own criterion of being intelligible to other users of English, the subject's phonological achievement was found to be successful. He succeeded throughout the period of observation in communicating his intended meaning to the researcher and to other users of English in observed social situations. The only instance of an unintelligible utterance occurred when he described, during a recording, a funeral at which men were *spirit* from the ladies; he had meant *separate*, as his explanation of his error showed, but he had mispronounced the word through vowel ellipsis. However, his speech is immediately recognizable to any proficient English
speaker as nonnative and has a strong foreign accent, to which the following segmental and supra-segmental aspects of pronunciation contributed:

4.2.4.1. Segmental features

4.2.4.1.1. Vowels

/a/ pronounced as /ʌ/ in difficult, experience, consultant, busy

/e/ pronounced as /i/ in animal, horrible, habit, rabbit, haven't

/a/ pronounced as /æ/ in gallons, reason, person

/æ/ shortened to /ə/ in her, first, burn, were, person, bird

/ɑ/ pronounced as /a/ in coffee

/æ/ pronounced as /ʌ/ in catch

/i/ shortened to /ɪ/ in people

vowels epenthesis: ask/e/d, chang/e/d, lov/e/d, fill/e/d, poe/e/m

ellipsis of vowels: municipality pronounced as /m\nspl\lti/, separate as /spar\t/  

4.2.4.1.2. Diphthongs

failure to diphthongize: /əʊ/ pronounced as /ə/ in go, no, road, stones, boat

/eɪ/ pronounced as /e/ in age

/æ/ pronounced as /æ/ in Nile

diphthongizing of vowels: foreign pronounced as /fɒr\t\n/, learn as /l\n\n/, river as /r\n\n\n/  

4.2.4.1.3. Consonants

/ð/ pronounced as /z/ in the, those, this, they, them, clothes

/θ/ pronounced as /s/ in something, nothing, month

/ʌ/ unvoiced as /f/ in seven

/p/ pronounced as /b/ in paradise

/b/ pronounced as /p/ in bark

/k/ pronounced as /ʃ/ in architect

/tʃ/ pronounced as /ʃ/ in cheap
4.2.4.2. Suprasegmental features

The subject generally managed to stress polysyllabic words correctly. However, at times he heightened voice pitch and lengthened sound segments in order to emphasize his meaning, which gave his speech an overly dramatic quality. He frequently employed drawn-out pauses between words, as if searching for a word or thinking about pronunciation, which made his speech halting and very slow. After listening to his own taped speech a few times before recordings began, he expressed determination to rid his speech of fillers (*uh* / *I think*) as he found these irritating to listen to. Although his reliance on fillers did diminish during the observation period, he did not succeed in eradicating this habit entirely. Apart from prosodic irregularities, his articulation is guttural (throaty) and rhotacised (burring of the r-sound), qualities which evoke the typical Syrian Arabic accent.

The subject’s phonological performance throughout the period of investigation remained stable; there was no observable improvement or deterioration in the ability to pronounce English words correctly. Occasional stumbling over long words (such as *Mediterranean*) did not impede conversational flow. Some phonemic variability, especially in vowel and consonant cluster articulation, was detected in all conversations, but this did not detract from semantic coherence or message. Morphological inaccuracies and syntactic reduction were more noticeable and at times more jarring to the listener than phonological deviation from standard norms, an opinion which the researcher’s transcript checker shared. The subject’s discourse was relevant throughout, generally entertaining, and informative, and at times he judged the content of his own conversation (*I talk too much about this simple problem / I talk too much about beer also / That is a good story / I am sorry, I see here my mind traveling / oh, but I will tell you good story*). Hardly any code-switching occurred and he handled turn-taking naturally and politely.

The subject has retained his foreign accent by choice; based on the premise of fossilization that an ongoing acquisition effort has to be present in spite of which the learner fails to achieve the targeted proficiency level, the speaker’s accent and the elements which constitute his accent cannot be called ‘fossilized’. His mimicking of a British accent suggests that with sustained effort he may be able to cultivate a non-foreign phonology should he choose to do so.

4.2.5. Compensatory communicative strategies

When disparity exists between a speaker’s (low) linguistic competence and (high) communicative willingness, he/she may often revert to compensatory strategies. The subject’s conversational
output was scrutinized for instances of the 13 compensatory strategies which have been identified over several decades of SLA research and which were taxonomised by Dörnyei (1995: 58). The aim was to determine whether the subject employed such strategies to the detriment of conversational success. The following instances were identified:

### 4.2.5.1. Message abandonment

- The subject managed to explain the gist of the lyrics of a famous Arabic song to the researcher, then expressed his frustration with his inability to translate in more detail: *I am sorry you cannot understand this singing! Too much to say and explain in English.*
- The subject abandoned his attempt to recall the name of a certain fruit and immediately continued his narrative: *some tine, tine, small fruit, green, hard, that tree become full of all the beautiful white flowers in the spring, I'm sorry.*

### 4.2.5.2. Topic avoidance

- The subject recalled the following incident: ... *the first time you speak to me and ask me about that building. I say no, I don't know, because I cannot talk about that in English!* ... *I became too afraid, how I, how will I explain my meaning...* .
- For the monologue, the subject was given (at his request) some topics to talk about. He abandoned these and instead formulated his own topic: *...seven marks as a subject what I must talk. But that is very difficult for me, I will try to talk what I can.*
- The subject seemed to gain confidence as the observation period continued, as he did not at any further point flinch from responding to the researcher's questions or suggested topics.

### 4.2.5.3. Circumlocution and approximation

The subject reverted to these strategies frequently throughout the period of observation in order to compensate for his inadequate vocabulary. Since these two strategy types may sometimes overlap, the following representative sample includes both types:

- *those whom I loved them, and habit to live with them, same my friends* (loved ones)
- *those [ladies] ... play ... work with the relation. They will sell love.* (prostitutes)
- *he think I not a polite man* (rude)
- *those words they write on the pictures... I not listen or look ... I busy with Arabic* (subtitles)
- *if the family bring good money, no problem to leave that prison* (bribery, corruption)
• give money to I don't know poor people, sick people (charity)
• that one nature make for the animal her, to will kill her (natural enemy, predator)
• the heavy, I don't know, heavy to put bags, transport all things, I think here rice (wagon/oxcart)
• took all things, equipments, what they need for the boats to go, maybe food (supplies)
• the papers of the married, longtime (marriage certificate)
• animals ...inside the home, to bring dirty and sick to people (unhygienic, unhealthy)
• all old broken stones, big buildings (ancient ruins)
• English has a strong position in the life (dominant/ global language)
• I did not like the French people, how they used before of our country (exploitation)
• he is so clever, clever from bad mind (cunning, devious, evil)
• we make two years of military work for Syria (compulsory military service)
• he was very good artist, to make pictures of land and water (landscape painter)
• I didn't accept [the teacher's] knowledge (lack of application, attention, concentration)
• about beer ... this material (substance, beverage)
• inside of the city, inside of the market (the city centre, the business area)
• of time sun go down (at sunset)
• what wife will get if her husband died (inheritance)

This sizeable list, featuring examples from all transcripts, shows that the subject was proficient in camouflaging his lexical shortcomings in verbal communication. The many ways in which he employed these strategies to bridge gaps in topics and contexts new to him showed a certain amount of lexical creativity; however, repeated successful use of this strategy often makes the acquisition of more sophisticated vocabulary redundant. The subject may have reached a plateau in which a limited vocabulary generally suffices for his needs. Apart from this general impression of lexical limitations, it was not possible to diagnose any specific fossilization behind this strategy.

4.2.5.4. All-purpose words

Only three possible all-purpose or 'umbrella' words could be identified in the subject's conversation:

• The word something was used only once: maybe you forget something open (tap) in your bathroom then the water flow out.

• The word thing was used a few times:

   English prevail ... of many things, computer, films, technology; other things, for my job, like names of buildings; not many things (furniture) in the rooms;
if you marry that lady ... you to get no money and lose all things;
talk stupid things like donkeys;
that same [your paradise] but some things different for us.

Most of these instances would be acceptable in colloquial conversation between native speakers, therefore they cannot categorically be said to have been used here to camouflage inadequate vocabulary.

- The word *same* however, appeared to be entrenched in the subject’s speech throughout the study period and was used frequently. Although the subject used the word correctly in a variety of semantic contexts (what that, same lighter? / that sound not same you read her letters / small box, same small prison), the omission of the definite article in noun and adjective constructions and the adverb *as* in comparative statements or idioms indicate low idiomatic proficiency. This pidginized structure is becoming a fixture in his speech and may, in spite of the variety of contexts in which it appeared, be described as a compensatory linguistic habit which is fossilizing.

### 4.2.5.5. Prefabricated patterns

The only prefabricated pattern or formula which the subject employed was *prevailed (of)*, which he said he had learned when he was a schoolboy. Although his usage was semantically appropriate in every context in which it appeared, this stock phrase imparted an incongruous formal register when used in colloquial conversation: *I begin to feel a new feeling which prevailed of myself* ... *he asked many times ... then long time after he prevail / But what I must do to prevail this man to thief my money? / English ... prevail of many things / British never prevailed of our country*. During unrecorded conversation the subject also voiced the following statement: *Your friend Joe his Arabic is good but I hear Marocco prevailed in his speaking*. He had certainly acquired the word *prevailed* and was aware of its meaning, but his inappropriate usage of it seemed to be fossilizing, thus preventing him from developing more fluidly idiomatic expressions of the semantic concept behind the word.

### 4.2.5.5. Appeals for help

Owing to his lack of confidence, the subject suggested recording a monologue by himself before conversations were recorded. The researcher is not aware of whether he prepared for it, mentally or otherwise, or whether he used any notes or other memory aids during the recording. During the second, fifth and seventh recording sessions he asked to be allowed to use an electronic
Arabic-English dictionary which he had borrowed from a friend. However, he used it infrequently, perhaps deciding that it was inappropriate or that it detracted from the flow of conversation. As he gained in confidence, he felt increasingly at ease in appealing for help in lexical expression; at first mostly indirectly (I don't know) and later directly (what is the word?). Instances of this strategy were:

- of, about America, that, that between countries, government of countries ... (his preoccupied expression and tone and sudden silence made it clear that he was searching for a word; in this case, politics)
- because you say English name, what that?
- instructions... guitarra, org, I don't know ... (here it was clear that he meant instruments)
- that small one of high sound, you call voilin? Voilin?
- excuse me, I don't know that word? (the researcher had used the word 'trial'.)
- what that, same lighter? From wood, to make small fire?
- the sea [from Lebanon, Greek, Italy], how you call it in English ...  
- I'm sorry, what is that word, to put human died in the ground?
- Small box, same small prison, a ... I don't know correct word here.

He did not rely on this strategy to the extent that it impeded conversation or communication. Since occasionally expressing one's ignorance of a word or term is an acceptable aspect of social discourse, and even in first-language conversations help is sometimes asked in articulating a thought exactly, the researcher diagnosed this strategy as helpful rather than as a hindrance to the subject's communication, and did not find that it encouraged linguistic fossilization to the same extent as approximation strategies.

4.2.5.7. Fillers

The subject used fillers such as uh and I think, signifying hesitation or difficulty in lexical recall, very frequently. In the majority of instances he managed to find a suitable word or expression to make his meaning clear, although in most instances he produced an approximation or a circumlocutory utterance. It was noticeable that he also quite often used the filler uh in Arabic conversation with friends, but in those cases it created the impression that he was searching for a more articulate, more humorous or more dramatic way of expressing his meaning. He had expressed imitation at his reliance on fillers when he listened to his recorded monologue and had undertaken to rid his speech of this habit; to some extent he managed to reduce their occurrence
over the period of observation, but since fillers also remain a characteristic of his first language speech, they cannot be described as camouflaging fossilization in his second language output.

4.2.5.8. Paralinguistic features

The subject used only one paralinguistic or kinesic signal to compensate for ignorance of a lexical item throughout the recordings. In relating an anecdote from his years of military service in Syria, he said: *I same leader, I have this* and gestured with both hands towards his shoulders, making it clear that he meant *epaulette*, therefore the rank of an officer. As the researcher immediately understood his intended meaning, this compensatory strategy was effective, and in no way detracted from the flow of his narrative. Interestingly enough, it was noted shortly after this recording that a colleague of the researcher, a native English speaker, did not know the meaning of the word *epaulette* either; therefore the subject’s ignorance of this lexical item (ironically, a Gallicism) was perhaps understandable.

4.2.6. Summary of fossilization findings

4.2.6.1. Fossilized errors

The following linguistic errors were identified as fossilized, as they appeared throughout the conversations and their correct versions were not present in the subject’s output:

- The verb *begin* was not once conjugated correctly in Simple Past tense contexts.
- The Simple Past tense form of the modal verb *must* and the genitive form of the neuter pronoun *it* were not once provided in obligatory contexts.
- The personal noun *liar* was used throughout when impersonal derivatives of *lie* were required.
- All Indirect Speech structures and Passive Voice structures were incorrectly constructed.

4.2.6.2. Fossilizing errors

The following errors appeared more often than their correct versions, therefore they were identified as fossilizing:

- incorrect Simple Past tense conjugation;
- incorrect use of the copula *be*;
- incorrect article usage;
• faulty clause construction;
• incorrect inflection of the lexemes *lie* and *die*;
• incorrect noun and adjective forms relating to countries and languages;
• overuse of incorrectly reduced comparative structures featuring *same*;
• incorrect use of *prevail*.

### 4.3. Causal factors

In this section an investigation into the causes of the fossilization which was identified during the linguistic analysis is presented. The investigation is subdivided into six areas which are relevant to the acquisition process, and the chapter ends with a brief summary of the findings.

#### 4.3.1. Learning materials and strategies

In an interview with the *Berkeley Language Center Newsletter*, Thalia Dorwick, Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief of McGraw Hill, a leading US publisher of foreign language textbooks, remembered that Bill van Patten had once told her that a textbook is like an egg: '... the person using it makes fried eggs, or an omelette, or whatever; the text ... is only a point of departure', regardless of the theory or methodology the user adheres to (Kaiser 1999: 5). Although textbooks can, and should, in her opinion, suggest useful communicative activities, they cannot *create* communicative situations in which intellectual acquisition becomes part of spontaneous behaviour (Kaiser: 3).

The subject of this study is inclined to a metacognitive approach to language acquisition and his Arabic-medium textbook (Omar: 1987) is his major source of grammar acquisition. He is of the opinion that his textbook is very useful and very good; however, his extreme reliance on it is not conducive to conversational adaptability, his major acquisition aim, because it focuses exclusively on what Cummins identified in 1997 and 1998 as cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) (Brown 2000: 246). Although it is comprehensively written and contains valuable expertise, it contains no authentic communicative activities contextualized in real life, or samples of natural speech such as dialogues. Instead, it provides lists of uncontextualised sentences demonstrating explained items of grammar. Its approach is traditional and many of the practice examples which the student is encouraged to memorise are stilted and artificial. The subject worked hard over a long period of time to *learn* grammatically correct example structures and sentences from his textbook, as his many pages of notes showed, but he could not manage to produce structures of
the same level of sophistication and correctness (specifically clauses, Passive Voice, and Indirect Speech structures) during spontaneous conversation. His low morpho-syntactical proficiency and persistent errors during conversation point to the need for development of accuracy in the other component of linguistic proficiency identified by Cummins, namely basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS).

Twenty-nine pages of the subject’s textbook are devoted to 'The Complex Sentence' and the grammar of clauses; the subject’s annotations and translations showed that he was actively perusing and trying to learn the material, yet in conversation his clausal proficiency was very low. The contrived nature of many of the complex sentence examples in the textbook, such as the following, is conspicuous: *I don’t know with whom you mix up.* (p 330) / *Look at the bird which is soaring.* (p 333) / *Such people as knew Ali admired his great abilities.* (p 335) / *Return whence you came.* (p 338) / *I taught him the way of writing the short story.* (p 345) / *A man who is experienced like you ought to do well.* (p 346) / *The victory that we gained perplexed them.* (p 347) / *Immediately on splitting the atom scientists invented the atomic bomb.* (p 350) / *His illness was not so serious that it caused no anxiety.* (p 354). The subject continuously produced either mostly simple, grammatically reduced sentences or relied on the conjunction and, which resulted in list-like sentences such as the following examples from the recorded data: *[Aleppo] is a big city and many places, and cheap.* / *I was a good student, and study hard ... and get good remarks.* / *What I will talk with them and to make mistakes and maybe they think what this old man sit with us.* The section on 'Non-defining Relative Clauses' suggests the following as examples to be memorised: *His new book, of which the last chapters are inconsistent, will win him a lot of censure.* / *Moreover, which you may hardly believe, he denied knowledge about anything about what he had already told you.* (pp 133-134). In spite of his active acquisition endeavours, the subject did not produce any complex sentences approaching this level of lexical and syntactical sophistication.

The Passive Voice section lists, among others, the following sentences (p 261): *Mecca is gone to every year.* / *The world is traveled round by tourists.* / *My being there is always insisted on by them.* / *A crutch is walked with by a cripple.* / *The flag is put up by them on several occasions.* / *Difficulties are put up with by Ali.* It is hard to imagine a colloquial conversation in which structures such as these would be used. The very few Passive Voice structures which the subject produced were all erroneous, and in one instance he felt it necessary to rephrase his utterance in the Active Voice: *All big plans and king and for what, they all forgetting ... forgot from the people. I mean to say all the people forget them, forget their big plans.*
In the area of Indirect Speech structures, which the subject could not manage to supply correctly in conversation, his textbook failed to promote successful performance. Again, this may have been due to the peculiar nature of the practice sentences used in explanations, such as: Napoleon said, 'Soldiers, behold that from the summit of these pyramids, forty centuries look down upon you.' / Omar said, 'Let's not.' (p 358) and of the examples which are to be memorised, such as the following: Ahmad said that his father used to give great attention to what should be. / Ali told me he had assured them his readiness to help. / Omar will say that he doubts the truth of my report. / Sarah recommended his brother not to disobey orders. / The journalist exclaimed with sorrow that the space shuttle had exploded.

Furthermore, the compartmentalized approach of the textbook may have contributed to the subject's repeatedly erroneous morphology, manifested in his repeated errors with the lexemes **lie** and **die**. Although derivatives appear throughout the textbook, they occur only in sentences illustrating other aspects of grammar; apart from a one-page section titled 'Kinds of Adjectives' which lists some adjectives formed with affixes, word families or groups of derivatives are neither mentioned nor explained as an integral part of the English language. The subject's low proficiency in supplying derivatives across parts-of-speech categories may have been a result of this gap in the learning material. The following derivative errors were typical: to thief money / to make terrible / to choice / he is death / to friend / he is poem / bring dirty and sick to people / papers of the married / how he liar too many times. When asked how he had succeeded in acquiring derivatives such as **beautiful**, **knowledge** and **elevation**, which he used correctly in conversation, he replied that he had learned them by using his *Al Mawrid* Arabic-English dictionary to translate these concepts directly from the Arabic.

It became clear that the subject was not adept at using his dictionary to distinguish between different parts of speech, or to acquire inflected word forms in English. Like the subject's textbook, many L2 textbooks fail to show the learner how to augment morphological proficiency and lexis by using dictionaries, and in monolingual explanatory dictionaries the user's guide sections are often above the linguistic level of the L2 learner. The following excerpt from *Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary* (1966: London, Chambers: p vi), which the subject borrowed from his Tunisian friend, provides a salient example: 'The participles and past indicative of uncompounded verbs (and other parts where desirable) and the plural of nouns, are given under the headword when any doubt is possible.' The subject said that he had tried to translate this sentence accurately into Arabic a few times, but his best efforts did not make sense to him.
The persistence of the present form *must* in Simple Past tense contexts, which was identified as a fossilized error, can be related to another shortcoming of this textbook. The subject indicated that he had worked repeatedly through the chapters on verbs and tenses. On closer scrutiny it transpired that the textbook does not list a past tense form of *must* in its table of modal verbs (p 240). In what seems to be a footnote below the table, the phrase *ought to have* appears, yet this is nowhere juxtaposed with the present structure *must*; the past form *had to* is also nowhere juxtaposed with the present form *have to*. The sentence *You ought to have done it* appears later in the section on auxiliary verbs. Although sentences such as *These shoes have to be repaired* appear in the chapter, there are no examples showing the past tense form of such sentences. The subject did not once use *have to* in a present structure, or *ought to have* in a past structure. Since he knows the present form *must* and used it accurately in every obligatory present context, his inability to supply the past form could be ascribed to the cryptic presentation of his learning material. The persistent error was therefore caused by incomplete acquisition; but if the *opportunity to progress* was not present due to an oversight in crucial learning material, can the faulty outcome in this instance be termed ‘fossilized’? Since the subject did not supply any alternative Simple Past forms, he may have assumed that *must*, like verbs such as *put*, *cut*, and *read*, are not inflected to show the simple past tense. According to the fossilization criteria listed in Section 3.2.4, however, his 100% non-suppliance of this item in obligatory contexts had to be diagnosed as a fossilized error.

The genitive pronominal form *its* was not once supplied in obligatory contexts during conversations. Since the Arabic language does not have a neuter personal pronoun equivalent of *it* (all nouns are classified as feminine or masculine and referred to as *he* or *she*), another shortcoming of the subject's textbook is that the genitive neuter form *its* appears only once, in a table listing the possessive pronoun forms: *its doors* (p 120), and is not used in any further examples.

The subject's use of the word *prevail* was identified as fossilizing. The only examples of the use of this word that could be found in his textbook were in sentences illustrating 'Clauses of Condition': *Unless peace prevails, humanity will not be happy. / If nations did not cooperate with each other, peace would not prevail.* (p 343). The word appears frequently in (English translations of) the Qur'an, also in chapter headings: Surah 2 section 20: *Unity must Prevail*; Surah 17 section 9: *Truth will Prevail*; Surah 35 section 2: *Truth will Prevail*. The word was acquired as a correct semantic item, but he continued to use it with a preposition, unlike the written examples available to him. The researcher has also heard this verb and *its* phrasal
versions being used, sometimes incorrectly or incongruously, by other Arabic-native English speakers in conversation. The subject said that he had learned this word (with the preposition of) when he was at school, and that he remembered it because the teacher had used it in class and it had appeared in examination papers. Instruction, learning material, and social input may have conspired to cause the fossilizing of this error.

Regarding the fossilizing of reduced same structures, his textbook section titled 'Comparison Constructions' (pp 82-86) contains no sentences illustrating the use of the same as constructions. The subsection titled 'Clauses of Comparison' features only two the same structures: The atomic and the hydrogen bombs are not the same in destructiveness. Surgery and medicine are of the same importance. (p 340). In this instance, his knowledge of grammar was not effective in countering the fossilizing of an erroneous structure because the book omits explanation of the same as structures, which are prevalent in the naturalistic lingua franca input to which he is exposed every day.

As far as the subject's very low proficiency in supplying Simple Past verb inflection was concerned, his learning material was not found to be a primary contributor to fossilization. Five pages in his grammar textbook are dedicated to explanations and examples of Simple Past tense usage, and a six-page list of irregular verb forms (infinitive, Simple Past and past participle forms) is supplied; the fossilized and fossilizing outcomes in this area of grammar can thus not be ascribed to his learning materials. The same has to be said of his fossilizing usage of the copula be, and of article usage, as his textbook provides many pages of explanations and examples of these items.

Isolated aspects of the subject's lexical production were identified as fossilized, and in general, simplistic vocabulary predominated in spite of the fairly sophisticated lexical level of his textbook. The many fillers and instances of hesitation in conversation signified difficulty in lexical recall and precision. In photocopied texts of the Grimm fairytales which he had read many times and from which he said he had learned many words, the subject had highlighted and translated thirty-two words (such as astonished, occasion, lamented, disgusting, delayed, despised, imprisoned, grief, violent and insisted); yet during conversation, in contexts where he could have used some of these words, he produced none of them. The subject knew, when asked, the meaning of lamented, and even remembered the context from a fairytale: the golden ball of the princess fell on the ground and rolled into the water then she lamented. Yet, in relating an anecdote about a funeral, he used approximations such as cry for the man died / to cry for him / cry very loud.
sound. He also remembered the sentence the cat was satisfied with her evil work (verbatim) from another story, but circumscribed evil as clever from bad mind during conversation, and satisfied as I happy with that / we happy to ... . In the story The Musicians of Bremen, which he enjoyed very much, lamps, candles and matches are mentioned a few times, yet the subject could not recall these words when he needed them in conversation, and produced simplistic approximations (I sit with ... light, fire? Small light to burn... / what that, same lighter? From wood, to make small fire?). Brown (2000: 34) mentions Gathercole’s 1988 study which found that learners could produce perfect structures without understanding what they were saying. In the subject’s case, he understood what he had acquired (the stories and their vocabulary) so well that he could paraphrase them in his own words (and even regaled his Arabic friends with his Arabic translation of The Musicians of Bremen); however, there was a degree of acquisition rigidity in that he was not always able to transpose words acquired in memorized contexts to contexts which arose spontaneously during conversations.

The subject’s reliance on the compensatory strategies of circumlocution and approximation may be regarded as a double-edged sword: whereas these strategies helped to make his discourse coherent, appropriate, and fluent, they recycled a limited vocabulary, which undermined the role of his learning materials by making higher-level vocabulary generally unnecessary in conversation. By using a basic verb and two basic adjectives in [animals] bring dirty and sick to people, he side-stepped higher-level words like cause, spread, illnesses, diseases, and unhygienic, nonetheless, his meaning was clear and his message was successfully conveyed. Although the use of these strategies does show a certain amount of linguistic creativity, they may promote the fossilization of limited lexical knowledge.

4.3.2 Input

The subject realised that his solitary acquisition efforts were not bringing about conversational fluency and that he needed to converse with speakers of the target language: I kept knowledge about the English but haven’t any practice / English language is very difficult for me because I didn’t meet a lot of people in this country at this time. Finding native or highly proficient speakers with whom to communicate is a dilemma for the learner who is not part of a communal learning situation as exists in classroom instruction: where I will, with who I will talk; and when the opportunity does arise, the learner is not able to converse fluently: ... hear those English and Americans talk, sometimes hallo, hallo, how are you, but I sorry I couldn’t speak more. Not being able to keep up with native-English social talk, the subject mostly acted as passive recipient in
the only situations which could provide him with the opportunity to practise his speaking skills with proficient speakers of the target language. Although he has a Tunisian friend who is an English teacher and they often speak about English in Arabic, they invariably converse in Arabic. Naturalistic speech in social situations with proficient speakers of the target language therefore provided mostly incomprehensible input.

The English media also did not provide much comprehensible input for the subject: *not understand all but I like sound, I learn sound of their talking* [on television] ... *I understand ... but not every word / I look to see newspapers, but the English too difficult*. He recognized the inadequacy of attempting to acquire conversational skills by translating work-related jargon: *I see and study from computer programs but I cannot say that is good for to learn grammar correct.* Although he finds his listening materials comprehensible, and in using his cassettes can control intake better by means of replay and repetition, the rigid question-and-answer format is not conducive to spontaneous performance in a real-life situation. In addition, his TOEFL listening materials focus on American campus-related matters and his British listening materials concentrate on using public facilities in England; the content of both is mostly irrelevant to his daily existence in the UAE.

The lingua franca English to which he is exposed daily presents no communication difficulties to him, but it provides ‘broken’ or ungrammatical pidginized input which does not allow him to augment his conversational grammatical accuracy. His many uses of reduced *same*-structures, frequent omission of articles and connectives, and mostly erroneous verb inflection reflected the simplified English heard all over the UAE in public. A typical example of lingua franca input was the following question which an Indian shopkeeper asked him while the researcher was present: *You buy time before same-same this?* An indicative sentence structure was used interrogatively, the verb was not inflected to show tense, the word *same* was doubled (apparently to mean ‘exactly the same’), no definite article was used, *as* was omitted, the object being referred to was not verbally specified but simply pointed to (a kinesic signal), and ‘the last time you came here’ or perhaps ‘last month’ was simply contracted as *time before* (tense was marked lexically and not grammatically); furthermore, as the shopkeeper was referring to an amount he had written down and not items purchased, he should have used the verb *pay*, not *buy*.

Three of the five principles of Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (Brown 2000: 278) were present in the subject’s acquisition situation and were contributing to persistently erroneous performance: the
learner was relying too much on cerebrally acquired knowledge about the language, acquisition was taking place in an unsystematic and confusing order, and the available input was either too challenging, not challenging enough, or generally too incorrect to promote linguistic accuracy in conversation.

In relaxed conversation with American and Canadian native speakers, the subject succeeded in communication: he understood what was said to him, responded appropriately, and was understood in return; however, it was clear that the other participants were speaking at an unnaturally slow pace for his benefit, and that for the subject the effort was laboured. The atmosphere was one of mutual goodwill, as indicated by non-linguistic signals such as facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice; however, as this made the subject feel at ease, it encouraged him to attempt to communicate more fluently, which resulted in many grammatical errors of the same kind as those committed during the recorded conversations. This illustrates what has also been observed in communicative language teaching: when message is over-prioritized, linguistic accuracy suffers, and fossilization may in the long run be promoted (Whitley 1993: 30). This observation accords with Shekhtman’s finding (2003: 2) that native speakers generally do not correct non-native speakers during social talk and thereby reinforce all types of linguistic fossilization. In summary, it can be said that the subject’s exposure to native or exemplary English speech was haphazard and sporadic, and that his acquisition environment generally provided grammatically substandard target-language input. Lack of input and input of inferior quality have both been identified as contributing factors to fossilization, as was shown in Section 2.3.7, and the outcomes in the subject’s situation supported this.

However, the subject’s accurate suppliance of building terminology during the recorded conversations may also be attributed to input. The following words were used: consultant, municipality, town planning department, material, technology, building, concrete specifications, measures, planning, engineer, foundation, swimming pool, electricity, transport, metal sheets, cables, equipment, apartment, site. He was aware of the fact that these are all nouns – I begin ... to translate from my work ... for my job ... names / for my work I need names of things, that important; he gave examples of how, amongst him and his colleagues, verbs are mostly said in Arabic and nouns such as the abovementioned in English, a compromise which results in an ungrammatical mixture of reduced Arabic and English. This illustrates how his professional environment aided vocabulary development (the acquisition of building jargon, mostly nouns) but at the same time encouraged fossilization by providing impoverished grammar input, if any.
Unlike the words which he had learned from reading fiction, he could recall and use these nouns in recorded conversations, probably because they had become part of his automatic vocabulary through daily use. This substantiates the conviction held by Nakuma (1998) and Hamilton (2001) that ‘the psychological mechanisms determining fossilization must operate across the board so that there must also be beneficial fossilization’ (Hamilton 2001: 75), and corroborates repetitive input as an important factor in adult language learning.

4.3.3. First-language influence

Although the subject had been making a concerted effort to understand how looking the English language and had spent many hours in learning and practising correct structures, he consistently produced faulty linguistic output. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis of the 1950s and 1960s posited that the main source of erroneous outcomes in second-language acquisition is the influence of the first language, but, as was mentioned in Section 2.3.4, subsequent research has not fully substantiated this hypothesis. The Arabic language may, however, provide the key to some of the persistent errors committed by the subject.

There is no equivalent of the English copula be in Arabic. In a statement such as I am hungry, inflection of the adjectival complement indicates person in Arabic. This may be another reason why the subject deleted the copula so frequently (he a poor man / she strong lady / she tall), as was shown by his low correct supplience mean of 28% in the recorded conversations. Long (2003: 518) is of the opinion that ‘communicatively redundant’ linguistic items may be most susceptible to fossilization; since Arabic does not make use of linking verbs such as the copula be, this item may well be perceived, on some profound level, as redundant by Arabic learners. Mukattash (1986: 192) also found that his Arab (Jordanian) learners were constantly omitting the copula be in their narrative productions.

The subject’s failure to supply singular pronominal forms correctly, even though this is a ‘smaller’ area of grammar to acquire than verb conjugation, may also have been caused by the fact that English employs three gender categories while Arabic has only two. An Arabic person saying in English I want to buy her (meaning an object) may be thinking in his/her first language; the researcher has observed that gender-pronominal errors are prevalent amongst Arabic-native English speakers. Furthermore, Arabic has three number categories which influence the verb
(singular, dual and plural); this shows that in some ways the English grammar system is more complicated (three genders), and in some ways Arabic is more complicated (three numbers). The SL speaker has to mentally disentangle the many subsystems in both languages; the subject did not always succeed in this during conversation, which gave rise to repeated pronominal errors. The fossilized error (non-suppliance of its) in this area may have been caused by the paucity of examples in the learning material, the different conceptual natures of the gender structure in the L1 and the L2, and L2 input from speakers of the same L1 background.

The very frequent article deletions committed by the subject (I buy book / she is teacher) could be ascribed to the influence of the first language. The definite article is indicated in Arabic by adding a prefix consisting of the letters al to the noun, and is pronounced differently according to whether nouns are ‘sun’ or ‘moon’ words. There is no indefinite article; an indefinite plural is indicated by doubling the last vowel of the noun, which is known as ‘nuation’ (Philips 1995: 12). When asked to translate the article use rules in his English grammar textbook, the subject explained these more or less as: use a or an when there are many and you don't mean any one; use the when you are talking about one; some plurals you can count, take the and some you can't count, don't. He questioned the rule with the following example: I buy a book for my son; the book was cheap, saying that in this case, the same book was being referred to, and that he therefore found the rule unclear. Although his grammar textbook features 21 pages of lists and explanations of the uses of articles (including a 4-page section titled 'The omission of the') which he had annotated heavily, in failing to supply lucidly formulated guidelines for usage, it may perhaps also have contributed to this fossilizing error. In addition, article errors may have been aggravated by pidginized lingua franca input, in which articles are mostly discarded (You want book? I give book / Where shop?), which forms a large percentage of his social conversational input. Thus, the first language could not be identified as the sole cause of the subject's fossilizing erroneous usage of articles. Since older learners are more reliant on their cognitive faculties, the lack of clearly understood conceptual guidelines (especially since the indefinite article could be perceived as a communicatively redundant item by Arab learners) made his production vulnerable to interference from his L1.

English has a larger vocabulary than Arabic, in part due to the many synonyms, quasi-synonyms (such as eat and devour / look and stare) and polysemic words (set the table / a set of tools) in English. Arabic employs adverbs to express verb variations to a greater extent than does English: whereas walk slowly, walk fast, walk carefully, walk softly, walk with an evil purpose, walk
joyfully are more commonly used in Arabic, English, on the other hand, has a larger variety of walk-verbs (amble, stroll, shuffle, sneak, trudge, traipse, plod, totter, stride, saunter, creep, mince, swan, march, tiptoe, to name a few), which obviously necessitates more, or more varied, vocabulary learning. An Arabic learner at the elementary L2–learning stage could make his meaning clear by employing the Arabic system of adverbial verb qualification; but his lexical range will appear limited to the proficient English speaker. The subject provided only two variations of the verb say throughout the recorded conversations (refuse and agree); his overuse of say may be due to an impoverished vocabulary, to the influence of simplified English input, or to the above-mentioned Arabic system of verb qualification: I said to the man he can fill / he said OK / he many times said / he said no I filled / I will say ... and he will say / say those words every time / to say their meaning / see how they say / then I say I will pay...I say good / they say less prices / we can say cheap prices / he will say every time / to say no problem / my friends will say look, look / my father say go! Get out! / her father say yes / I will say the number one for Arabs / she said hello I come to [the funeral] / but we say better.

The subject admitted that he sometimes felt confused by all the ‘small’ elements necessary to construct meaning in English (a statement such as Elizabeth is the queen of Britain uses six words in English whereas Arabic would employ three). English has changed over the centuries from a highly inflected language to one which relies on a significant number of smaller particles such as auxiliaries to create meaning, whereas Arabic uses a smaller number of connecting particles but a large variety of inflectional morphology. The Arabic preposition fee (also spelt fi) provides a good example of a ‘hard-working’ connecting particle: according to context, it can mean in, at, on, near, by, within, during, among, in the company of, with, about, concerning, regarding, for the sake of, on behalf of, according to, or in proportion to (Philips 1995: 11). Verb and noun inflection often ‘absorb’ the relation between them which in English necessitates the use of a preposition (Philips 1995: 14). Although accuracy in preposition use was not quantified during the data analysis process, it was observed that this aspect of lexical acquisition was often erroneous and that a limited range of prepositions were ‘recycled’ throughout the conversations. The subject’s over-suppliance of the preposition to (traveling is difficult to us / fill it to me / phone to me / go to anywhere / will to go / can to choice / to will kill / will make me to cry) reflected his insecurity in this linguistic area, and perhaps his lack of insight into the role of the infinitive form of the verb. To a large extent, the L2 learner simply has to learn and memorise prepositional phrases. The subject said that whereas he found it easy to remember the correct preposition when the relation it denotes is concrete and imaginable (the book is on the table / I
am in the house), its abstract uses (afraid of / sorry for) were not easy to remember always. This ties in with a previous observation made by the researcher with Arab EL2 learners; when a group of twelve adult Emirati learners to whom the researcher taught an extramural English course in 2006 were asked to supply the correct preposition in congratulations ___ your birthday, answers included to, with, by, at, in, about, for, and only one (accidental) suppliance of on. In Arabic only the word mabrouk would be used, and the students said that they found on (which is not determined by any rule) the least logical choice. Many preposition errors are heard in English L2 speech in the UAE (I say for you / shop of cakes); unless there is robust learning and memorizing of prepositions, the learner, having no logical mental aid or rule of usage to fall back on in this instance, may be vulnerable to L1 influence and erroneous conversational input in this area.

As was noted in Section 2.3.4, applied linguists differ in their approaches to and explanations of the effects of the first language in SLA. Each language is said to contain a unique mental structure and to set the parameters of its functional categories in a unique way; the exact psycholinguistic relation between the first and additional languages has not yet been determined as research findings have been diverse (Brown 2000: 68). One of the unsolved questions in SLA is whether errors, and in particular strongly resistant errors, should be ascribed mainly to the nature of the first language, the nature of the second language, or the nature of the mental interplay between the two which underlies the acquisition process. It seems logical to say that faulty interlanguage probably stems from a shifting combination of all three. The subject’s repeated errors in usage of the copula be could be due to its absence in Arabic, the oddities of English grammar – be can be used as a copula (is sick), a tense auxiliary (is going), or a Voice auxiliary (is called) – or to the uncertain trial-and-error stage which is a natural phenomenon when newly acquired linguistic material is being used and the speaker is still thinking in the first language but communicating in the second. Since the natural language-learning instinct of early childhood has faded, the adult L2 learner has to rely on cognitive effort to acquire and recall L2 material correctly, but this effort may be constantly thwarted by the prominence of the L1 in the cognitive sphere. A small but telling detail noticed during data collection was that the subject, when writing in English, wrote in print, and formed letters from the bottom right side up towards the left, crossing the t, for example, from right to left; he also filled his notebooks from back to front, which signified the profound influence of his first language.
4.3.4. Maturational factors

One of the most widely agreed upon phenomena in SLA is that age and age-related factors contribute to faulty outcomes in adult second-language acquisition, as most research outcomes confirm the hypothesis that once adolescence has passed, the human brain is less receptive to acquiring a new language. Although the subject of this research did begin to learn English during his teenage years, it was a compulsory classroom learning situation in which he was not interested, therefore he did not make much effort, and what he had learned was not used at all for twenty years.

However, Martinez (1989: 2) has pointed out that most adult learners will demonstrate fossilization of some sort, especially when they consciously or unconsciously decide that they have reached a level of proficiency which is adequate to their needs. The subject has consciously decided that he does not want to attain native-like proficiency (I need more of English, not too much). He also decided on autodidactic strategies instead of interpersonal instruction, which points to the circumstantial variables which often influence adult learners’ lives and are mostly absent from the adolescent learner’s life: due to his financial commitments to his dependents, he is trying to learn on a budget: he felt he could not afford conversation classes, his choice of textbook was determined by what he could find in a predominantly Arabic-medium library, and listening materials were given to him by friends. His work routine also does not leave him much time and energy to attend regular after-hours classes. His daily office hours are 08:30 to 13:30 and 17:00 to 21:00; at times he has to travel to other areas, work over weekends, or take work home.

McClelland et al (2002) concluded from their research that L2 perceptual and processing difficulties may not be permanent if adult learners are provided with proper perceptual training. As was pointed out in Section 4.2.3, the subject’s textbook did not entirely clarify some aspects of the L2 for him. He is also learning without a teacher or mentor due to his circumstances, therefore he is acquiring English in an unguided way in which negative evidence is entirely absent; this contributed, in tandem with a lack of exemplary natural input, to perceptual difficulties which produced fossilization of grammatical errors during conversational performance.

Although the subject is not motivated (for reasons that will be discussed in Section 4.2.5) to cultivate a native-like accent, he also admitted that ... sound of Arab ... easier for me ... that
how I speak English / my mouth make sounds like I learn from my society; my mother, my father. The persistence of a foreign accent has mostly been ascribed to biological factors: the neuromuscular plasticity of childhood atrophies during adolescence so that most adult learners do not produce authentic second language phonology (Brown 2000: 58). Spolsky (2000: 162) argues that although most adult SL speakers and users do retain traces of an accent, 'correlation is ... not causality', and that aptitude, motivation and social context may contribute as much as, if not more than, the purely biological-maturational faculties to a non-target-like accent. One may here consider the phenomenon of some foreign-born Hollywood stars who, being actors, can reproduce any accent in English they choose to, but prefer to retain their foreign accent in real life and on screen as a 'trademark' (Antonio Banderas, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jean-Claude Van Damme). It is also said that, unlike his brother who has no foreign accent, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger consciously retained his foreign accent (Han 2004a: 123).

A 'fossilized' accent in late-acquired second language can be overcome with sufficient guidance. In 2006, 22 931 foreign-schooled doctors took the US Medical Licensing Exam, which has an oral component in which actors play the roles of patients (Accent Matters, Gulf News: 18 August 2006, p 27). The fundamental problem in communication between foreign-trained doctors and American NS patients is not accent per se, but intelligibility and quality of language exchange, which depends on rhythm, stress patterns and intonation. These often do not match American English, but patients may feel reluctant or may not have the stamina to question the physician's unclear speech. Foreign doctors are encouraged to undergo accent modification therapy which is offered by specialist speech therapists; techniques include the use of mirrors, videotapes, audiotapes and electropalatography. The latter involves wearing a device on the palate which is outfitted with electrodes; during therapy the device is connected to an electronic unit which shows the position of the tongue on a screen during speech. The success rate in acquiring an authentic American accent this way is high, but success depends on follow-through; some doctors cannot find enough time to complete the therapy and/or to do the post-therapy exercises. The therapy course is very expensive but fees are covered by medical personnel's insurance. If such specialized phonological re-training courses were readily available and affordable to (adult) L2 learners, the subject of this study may have been able to attain native-like phonology. His persistent foreign accent can therefore be ascribed to circumstantial factors in his life (such as opportunity, time, funds) as much as to bio-maturational and psychological factors.
Lastly, it is a natural phenomenon that the memory faculties tend to become less dynamic as humans age. As was mentioned in Section 2.3.1, research has shown that in patients with senile aphasia and semantic dementia, lexical recall is affected earlier and more profoundly than abstract or conceptual knowledge, which signifies that grammar structures are embedded more deeply in the mind than item knowledge such as vocabulary. Although the subject is only forty-seven years old, L2 lexical learning and recall may to some extent be influenced by maturational factors, especially since he is also continuously absorbing new knowledge and skills in other spheres (his career, music, poetry).

In her list of putative causes of fossilization which have been identified by SLA research, Han (2004a: 29) includes the following (unspecified) neuro-biological factors:

- changes in the neural structure of the brain (e.g. Schumann 1978, Scovel 2000)
- maturational constraints (e.g. DeKeyser 2000, Seliger 1978)
- age (e.g. Schmidt 1983)
- decrease of cerebral plasticity for implicit acquisition (e.g. Paradis 1994)
- neural entrenchment (e.g. N.Ellis 2002)
- lack of talent (e.g. Ioup et al 1994).

Lack of talent or ability has been ruled out as a contributor to fossilization in this subject’s case. Memory is not specifically mentioned in Han’s list, but it is surely the underlying mechanism which draws together and retains all incoming linguistic information. Evan O’Dorney, 13-year old winner of the 2007 American National Spelling Bee, had the following to say after his victory: ‘With math, I really like the way the numbers fit together; spelling is just a bunch of memorization.’ (Thirteen-year-old Wins National Bee, Khaleej Times, 2 June 2007, p 12). In explaining how the human brain works, J. D. Sinclair (1987: 76-80) compares it to a computer: the equivalent of the on-off switch of a computer is the synapse, and human behaviour depends on which of the estimated 100 trillion synapses are on or off at a given moment. However, being a machine, the computer knows only ‘on’ and ‘off’, or 1 and 0 in binary terms; being organic entities, synapses can be partially opened or closed, changing their strength at times, so that signals get through in varying degrees of intensity. Since all synapses in the brain circuitry are interconnected, a change in a single one may influence the entire system. Furthermore: whereas the functions of processing and memory are separated in a computer, each synapse works like a tiny microprocessor, storing information and processing signals at the same time. Whereas an accessed computer file will contain data exactly as it was stored or saved, most information in
the brain appears in altered form when it is retrieved later, which is thought due to the busy lives of the synapses. Immediate recall is not always possible because synapses become ‘tired’, overused, or overloaded; the information needed may spring to mind later, when the synapses have rested and the network has somehow revitalised itself. To complicate matters further, when hormones or substances such as drugs enter the fluid in which the brain lies, the entire system changes its workings, as if a second layer of behaviour has imposed itself on the intricate system of neurons and synapses. Being part of a physiological entity, the brain is subject to the physical effects of the ageing process, and accumulation of stored information and decades of processing cause slowing down of the neurological functions. MacWhinney (2005: 13) notes that many of these effects begin by the age of forty-five.

This description serves to show that age has to have an effect in late L2 learning, and that individual – also individual physiological factors – and circumstantial factors cause individual differences in acquisition outcomes. As the data in this study show, successful language learning did take place in spite of the effects of ageing, but memory and recall in particular may have been affected in the subject’s case. Recurrent problems in supplying Simple Past tense conjugation, in which the subject achieved a mean correct suppliency rate of 24% over the nine-month period, may have been caused by the effects of ageing. Simple Past tense conjugation in English is perhaps somewhat simpler than its Arabic equivalent because all persons, singular and plural, take the same form of the verb (in the affirmative indicative mood), unlike in Arabic; producing the correct English forms during conversation is thus mostly a matter of memorizing them (his textbook provides an extensive list of conjugated irregular verb forms), computing an obligatory context, and recalling the memorized form. The maturational variable has thus played a part in the fossilization which was identified in the subject’s output.

4.3.5. Socio-cultural factors

According to Kramsch (2002: 11), a full portrayal of the language acquisition process can only be given when the social and cultural context of language learning activities are taken into account, as a language is not mere cerebral data acquired by an individual in isolation. The subject’s English learning history has been shaped by social and cultural realities: an additional language was a compulsory part of the curriculum of his high school in Syria; he chose English because he was anti-French at that stage; he was not motivated because English was not part of his reality and he never met English people; the socialist regime at the time did not encourage exposure to
Western media or cultural imports; he decided to learn more English once he became exposed to users of English in Saudi Arabia and later in the UAE; his children all studied or are studying English; American politics now play a crucial role in the Middle East and in Syria; the electronic mass media are dominated by English; and his son aims to relocate to the USA. All these factors have had an impact on the subject's acquisition history, but how have they contributed to the repeatedly faulty outcomes identified in output?

His original motives for learning English were negative; he was taught by nonnative speakers who continually reverted to Arabic in the classroom; and the methods followed were apparently teacher- and grammar-centred. He grew up in an anti-Western socialist dictatorship and had hardly any exposure to English, English people and English culture. After twenty years he resumed his learning of English mostly for utilitarian purposes such as being able to use work-related English computer programs and to deal with Asian-English colleagues. His professional milieu may indirectly be contributing to fossilized outcomes: whereas linguistic errors or unclear pronunciation in the medical, academic, aviatory, public speaking, media, or customer liaison areas, for example, may have serious immediate consequences, a laissez faire approach to English in the subject's work environment is acceptable because there is leeway to negotiate errors in his professional situation, and persons who can translate are at hand. In addition, his foreign accent is not of much import since he is daily surrounded by a variety of foreign accents.

The subject has only sporadic contact with native speakers; although he has a Tunisian friend who is an English lecturer and a highly proficient English speaker, they speak Arabic to each other socially. Schumann posited in 1976 (cited in Brown 2000: 185) that a lack of affinity and/or familiarity with the target language and culture and the resultant psychological distance between the learner and target-language speakers contribute to fossilized language. This, in addition to a paucity of role-model linguistic input, may have had a detrimental influence on the subject's conversational skills. Although his attitude to English/American people and culture is positive, there is psychological distance as he has not established any real friendships with English-speaking persons. The second or foreign language English speakers whom he encounters socially have non-English or mixed English (such as Hindi and English) home languages, cultures and lifestyles; socializing with them does not bring him any closer, psychologically, to the target culture or to its Weltanschauung.
The subject is proud of his Arabic and Syrian heritage, which he says can be traced back more than seven thousand years (America, according to him, is 'like little baby' in comparison). He is knowledgeable about the history of his culture and language; he admires and quotes the classical Arabic poets such as Al Mutanabbi, reads contemporary writers such as Nobel Prize winner Mahfouz, and plays the oud and sings in the traditional Syrian style. Referring to what Alpert and Haber (1960) and Scovel (1978) identified as 'facilitative anxiety' and Oxford (1999) as 'helpful anxiety', which is related to the competitive drive (cited in Brown 2000: 151), this attitude may also have contributed to his faulty acquisition in the following way: since he is an excellent speaker and admirer of his own language, committing errors in English does not affect his self-esteem negatively; if it had, he might have been spurred on to achieve greater proficiency sooner. The subject says that he always keeps in mind that the English speakers with whom he converses in the UAE probably cannot speak much (correct) Arabic, so that while he might feel 'like a baby' when speaking English, he is aware that they, too, are probably 'like babies' in his first language.

Moyer (2004:42) holds that pronunciation is an aspect of linguistic ability which is psychologically loaded, as it causes the speaker to be immediately identified and labelled as a native or a non-native speaker. Guiora (1992) distinguishes the cognitive dimension from the affective dimension of the language ego, and theorises that when identity has become established in life, fluctuations in the ego become uncomfortable; one way of maintaining an intact (cognitive and affective) language ego is by maintaining a stereotypical accent. Spolsky (2000: 163) found that adult L2 learners may on purpose 'leave empty regions in their proficiency, symbolically representing and so maintaining the ... identity associated with their native language' (Spolsky: 163). Considering the subject's pride in his cultural and linguistic identity, this may pertain to his case; he did, however, try to improve his articulation of English words and sounds by means of listening activities. Moyer (2004: 46) maintains that accent is not a deterrent to comprehensibility, and in this subject's case this is true. This researcher finds the typical Indian accents heard in the UAE more difficult to understand than the typical Arabic accent, because of the faster tempo and 'sing-song' intonation of Indian speakers of English, and has also found the accents of native speakers from Scotland and Yorkshire less intelligible than that of the subject. He is aware of the varieties of accents within the 'Inner Circle' – American and British not sound the same, they worry about that? They all English. Scottish, Irish, that one I hear say thank you very mooch, other say much, they happy with that – and even noticed different sociolects: he described the English of two British security guards he had met as sound of simple mens in comparison with the English
of another acquaintance, a British academic. He knows that although there may be benchmarks for ideal pronunciation, as in the Arabic world, most native English speakers are satisfied to reproduce the accent and pronunciation which they learned in their communities and schools and with which they feel comfortable.

Being a highly proficient user of English and sounding like a native speaker thus does not carry any special status for him; this contrasts with the attitude of some Arabs whom the researcher has met personally: they have lived in North America, have North American passports, their speech is very close to that of North American native English speakers, and they downplay their Arabic roots in public ('I am American'/ 'I am Canadian'). This shows that the desire to assimilate culturally is often the consequence of residence in a target-language community, where the immigrant's accent distinguishes him/her as a foreigner or member of a minority group and may reduce his/her chances in the job competition sphere or other areas of ambition. The subject of this research is acquiring English in a milieu where such social pressures to conform to target-language norms are absent, therefore he has retained his Arabic accent.

Furthermore, he was aware of cultural, religious and linguistic relativity as a child; he had Turkish, Jewish, Kurdish and Armenian friends, whose homes in his village he often visited, and he still remembers some words and phrases from their languages. These friends and their families acquired Arabic because it was the dominant language in the community and they needed it for survival purposes. The subject takes a pragmatic view of his acquisition of English and the level of proficiency which he needs to develop for his purposes, and is not aiming for second-language perfection. He compared his English to that of the researcher by using a metaphor of two homes, one stark and simple and the other beautifully decorated: ...

your English more nice, more beautiful than of mine.

Pickering (2006: 226) mentions research by Lindemann (2002) which indicates that listener attitudes may influence communicative outcomes. North Americans who had positive and negative attitudes toward Koreans were matched with Korean L2 English speakers and asked to complete a map task; the native speakers with negative attitudes problematized the contributions of their task partners, did not engage in feedback with them, and rated their interactions during tasks as unsuccessful, although outcomes indicated that there had been no intelligibility problems. Lindemann therefore ascribed the problems which occurred to negative reactions to a foreign accent, which illustrates MacWhinney's observation that negative sociocultural attitudes
from first language speakers may impact the L2 learning process negatively (Section 2.3.6). The UAE is a cosmopolitan society in which tolerance is actively encouraged; although the subject occasionally voiced criticisms of 'English culture' such as the following during the research period, he did so in a good-natured way, implying that his awareness of differences between the L1 and L2 cultures did not detract from his positive attitude to the L2:

- talk too much loud, sometimes in Trader Vic's that British mens sounding like twenty donkeys, everyone will hear their talking (Arabs generally socialize with more decorum in public places);

- I like too much Arabic music, not like English music, some too hard...not feeling, more loud, like angry person (he does not like rock music);

- that strange for you, with Muslim more than one wife; but we say better, not have wife and running like fox in the secret road to have girlfriend, then he will leave maybe his wife and children and some money they will fight from that business of fox (he is opposed to divorce and supports polygamy);

- animals haram inside the home ...I see in the films of English, English people will kiss that dog, cat, to friend that animal, sleep on the bed, that horrible, why that (Arabs generally do not allow animals, especially dogs, inside homes).

4.3.6. Affective factors

The subject's personality combines introversion and extroversion. He enjoys socializing in general, is a confident and entertaining conversationalist in Arabic, enjoys playing the oud and singing to his friends, and has a lively sense of humour. However, he also tends to be a philosophically inclined 'loner' who likes to spend time on his own. Occasional statements made during recorded conversations testify to this trait: I want to leave my town ... I became sick from the society ... so I decide I must travel / I'm happy with my time (alone) / a group, that is not good for me / I walk some times to get away from other mens / I get angry from the people and ... I went every time to my farm and alone, to work, to find the nature, that good. This has influenced his choice of learning strategies and methods; he prefers to work alone so that he is in control of his learning, free to set his own goals, and not dependent on the formal evaluation of others; he prefers to evaluate his progress by testing his acquired skills in real-life communicative situations. His distaste of being dependent on others also motivated him to improve his English proficiency when he came to the UAE: I feel that not correct to every time someone must come to help, to translate for me and that engineer everything. However, his main learning method
(learning grammar in isolation), chosen in part according to his personal inclinations, is not entirely appropriate to his main linguistic aim (communicative success), so that fossilization is promoted by unsystematic integration of new material and/or a lack of exemplary conversational input, such as a teacher could provide.

Ironically, as was pointed out in Section 4.4.5, the subject's healthy self-esteem may be contributing to repeated errors; as his self-image is solidly grounded in his Arabic identity, substandard output in English does not cause him any significant negative affective reactions. However, when the researcher first made the acquaintance of the subject, he appeared embarrassed in public at his lack of proficiency in English and later admitted as much: *I say no, I don't know, because I cannot talk about that in English / I become too afraid, how will I explain my meaning for this lady / I could not say, I was afraid to say anything so I ... said no, I didn't know what you talk about. What [must] you [have] thought! This is an example of situational linguistic inhibition attributable to the context, as often occurs in SL performance situations. The subject was with a Tunisian friend, a fluent English speaker; as the researcher was professionally acquainted with this person, it was wrongly assumed that the subject was also a fluent English speaker, thus the level of address (on the topic of the great Crusader castles of Syria, in particular the Krak des Chevaliers) was beyond his conversational capabilities. He had also never spoken English socially to a *female* native speaker; thus his embarrassment at linguistic failure in this situation can be attributed to the sudden demands and the social context of the 'task', for which he was not ready.

The subject has undeniably made great progress in his acquisition in isolation, and in terms of his aim to be able to communicate in English, his effort so far has been successful. His perseverance and success may in large part be the result of the affective dimension of motivation: his acquisition effort has increasingly become focused on pleasing and supporting his son, who is planning a career in America. When the subject spoke about his son during the unrecorded sessions he used words such as *medicine, cardiology, entrance exam, application, accommodation* and *embassy*. As he has an affective interest in his son's career—and his son writes a lot of English in e-mails to him, these words, which must have featured in conversations and e-mails between them, have become entrenched in his memory. This is another example of one of Krashen's Input Hypothesis principles (Brown 2000: 278): when the 'affective filter' is low, successful acquisition is promoted. Considering the many difficulties and disappointments the SL learner faces, this subject's case illustrates MacIntyre's claim that without a positive contribution from the 'constellation' of affective factors, the learner is unlikely to persist in his/her learning
endeavours (MacIntyre 1995: 96). However, the affective bond between the subject and his son was formed in the medium of Arabic; he may be improving his English skills so as not to appear ignorant should he visit his son in America one day, but he knows that they will always be able to converse in Arabic and that his son will be protective and helpful should he make linguistic errors in public. The positive familial bond may thus be contributing in a subtle way to prolonged interlanguage instability whilst, ironically, providing a psychological motive for continued acquisition efforts; this proves how intricately entwined the causes of learning outcomes may be in the 'trillion-synapse human brain' (Pinker 1998, cited in Spolsky 2000: 166).

4.3.7. Summary

A variety of causal factors contributed simultaneously to fossilization in each of the six dimensions of the acquisition process which were investigated. The fossilized errors all concerned morpho-lexical and syntactical items and structures; a causal relationship between fossilized (most persistent) errors and linguistic factors (the L1, the TL, input, learning materials) was more apparent than between fossilizing errors and linguistic factors. Fossilizing errors were more numerous, ranged over more domains, and reflected the influence of extra-linguistic (socio-cultural, psychological, maturational) factors more clearly.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

The construct of fossilization has enjoyed popularity in the SLA literature despite its disputed nature; research is warranted because a continued effort may help to develop pedagogical strategies that may better combat persistent errors in second language acquisition. Considering the climate of controversy around the phenomenon, this research has been exploratory in nature and can only present tentative conclusions and recommendations.

5.2. Research findings

The study aimed to answer the following three questions:

- Can fossilization be identified in learner language?
- Can the cause(s) of fossilization be identified?
- Are research findings in an individual learner’s case relevant to the field of SLA?

5.2.1. The identification of fossilization

This empirical investigation aimed to distinguish between deeply entrenched erroneousness and surface interlanguage instability in the output of a learner. The criteria which were formulated to guide analysis were effective in maintaining a distinction between fossilized errors (unchanged throughout the period of observation), fossilizing errors (items that were erroneous in the majority of instances), and lesser errors (items which were erroneous in the minority of instances). Fossilized errors and unstable interlanguage erroneousness were thus dealt with separately. Investigating fossilization in five domains of language necessarily limited the scope of findings in each area, but it supplied a rounded picture of the subject’s linguistic achievement and made it possible to explore the modular nature of fossilization.

The outcomes of this research confirm the modular nature of fossilization in that they show that not all areas of an individual learner’s SL acquisition are equally susceptible to fossilization. Yoria (1985, cited in Selinker 1993: 21-22) and Mukattash (1986) concluded that the construct of fossilization is not useful to SLA because it is devoid of predictive power. Although this study analysed the production of only one adult learner and, validating their opinion, could not prove which error types are ‘insusceptible to defossilization’ (Mukattash 1986: 201) in general, the

An interesting point arose concerning the subject’s accent. Han cautions that fossilization should only be premised on ‘optimal learning conditions’: exposure to the TL, motivation to learn, and opportunity to practise (Han 2004a: 123) The subject of this research was not motivated to attain a native-like accent; following Han’s criteria, his accent cannot be identified as fossilized. Yet, some authors view a persistent foreign accent as the classic example of fossilization, or learning failure, in second language acquisition: ‘[Fossilization] is most saliently manifested phonologically in “foreign accents” in the speech of those who have learned a second language after puberty ...’ (Brown 2000: 231). This shows that SLA findings differ because criteria differ.

As the study spanned only nine months, fossilized linguistic items could only be labelled as relatively permanent, or permanent during the research period, and prognoses as to future linguistic performance could not be made without doubt. This contradicts Selinker’s forbidding statement (1993: 16) that ‘fossilized ils exist no matter what learners do in terms of further exposure’ (my emphasis), but also brings Bierbaumer’s objection against the concept of fossilization (1997: 2) into sharper focus: how helpful would predictions of inevitable failure be to the learning and teaching of an additional language? It seems probable that if no significant change occurs in the acquisition situation of the subject of this study, his fossilized errors will not soon be righted; but, as Larsen-Freeman argues (1997: 157), the SLA process, being an unstable entity which is subject to continuous combinations and recombinations of many variables, may change in any number of ways at any moment due to ‘triggers’ which cannot be foreseen.

5.2.2. Identifying the causes of fossilization

The many contributing variables which this research identified validate Larsen-Freeman’s description (1997: 143) of SLA as a complex system comprising a large number of components or agents; the combinations in which these factors were shown to operate substantiate Selinker and Lakshmanan’s view of fossilization (1992) as resulting from the effects of a cluster of co-factors.

Han suggests that items or structures which present both linguistic and psycholinguistic complexity to the learner are most likely to become fossilized (2004a: 117-118). The findings of this study do not substantiate her view entirely. Whereas the subject’s fossilized syntactical errors
(clause construction and Passive Voice marking) signified difficulties in implementing conceptual knowledge, i.e. psycholinguistic difficulty, fossilized discrete-item errors such as incorrect Simple Past verb forms and lexical items could not be ascribed to their inherent complexity; the subject’s understanding of the past tense concept did not seem insufficient as he had supplied 24% of Simple Past tense verbs correctly in obligatory contexts and did not once use a past tense verb in a present or future context. Han and Selinker (1999: 257) state that learner perceptions of their own interlanguage ‘deserve to be explored, as they might be a guide to what is motivating particularly puzzling interlanguage’; as the subject said more than once during the research period that he does not spend enough time learning words and often forgets words which he had known and used earlier, the conclusion that inadequate memorization as well as lexical recall difficulties contributed to fossilized discrete-item errors can safely be drawn.

All linguistic aspects of the subject’s acquisition (the L1, the TL, input, learning materials) were influenced by extra-linguistic (socio-cultural, psychological) factors. For example, the subject’s textbook may have contributed in various ways to fossilized outcomes, but as this researcher is largely unfamiliar with the Arabic language, it was not clear whether the quality of the explanations in his textbook or incorrect/inadequate internalization of rules and concepts was at fault. The absence of a teacher or mentor, itself the result of other factors such as age, inclination, time and finances, therefore also contributed to fossilization. Furthermore, since the subject’s L1 does not have a neuter genitive pronoun, the influence of his L1 seemed to be the most logical explanation for his omission of it in his L2. However, the correct form was available in the subject’s learning material, and his textbook annotations and written notes showed that he had actively been studying personal pronoun forms and their uses. The fossilized error could thus have been caused primarily by deficiencies in recall, or by not noticing the errors he was making when using material which he had studied. This shows that the acquisition process is so complicated that the exact factors and the extent to which they engender fossilization can mostly only be inferred.

Although the grammatically reduced and erroneous lingua franca speech in the subject’s social milieu contributed to fossilization in his output, it also contributed, ironically, to his successful communication in his interlanguage. The English prevalent in the UAE may be a pidginized form of his TL, but, unlike a second language which is acquired academically and used only in the classroom, it is a means of practical communication which brings tangible results when he uses it, and thereby stimulates confidence and further acquisition. Against the prevailing views at the
time, Hatch maintained in 1978 that the development of syntax does not consist of structures which are first learned and then chained together, but that it is essentially driven by discourse, so that social and affective variables contribute to the process (Nunan 1992: 84). Although the subject’s grammar was largely fossilizing, he showed discoursal proficiency and conversational confidence; this proves that discourse, with its socio-affective dimensions, has been a stronger driving force than cognitive-academic learning in his syntactical development. This affirms the validity of Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, and also shows that an individual factor may simultaneously influence the acquisition process positively and negatively.

This study has also revealed that the role of motivation in fossilized outcomes is multidimensional. The subject of this study was motivated instrumentally (to advance professionally), socio-affectively (to improve his social life), and affectively (to support his children in their L2 endeavours); but as there was no pressure in any of these spheres to achieve native-like competence in English because errors did not have any serious consequences in his life, he aimed only to achieve a working L2 competence, and by these standards his L2 acquisition has so far been successful.

In summary, although many causal factors and sub-factors were identified, their exact nature and contribution to fossilization could only be surmised, since linguistic and extra-linguistic causal variables were closely entwined and acting together in shifting combinations. All learning happens though the incredibly complicated trillion-synapse human brain; how exactly psychological factors such as memory, recall, noticing, computational agility, mental fatigue, preoccupation with other matters, subconscious associations, unfinished learning, talent and cognitive idiosyncracies conspired to produce each persistent error was unfathomable. This study therefore finds that the phenomenon of fossilization is measurable in linguistic output, but that its workings are too multifaceted to make irrefutable pronouncements on exact causes.

5.3. Relevance of the study to the field of SLA

Considering that most users of English today are not first-language speakers, that they use English for practical purposes, that their teachers are often nonnative speakers, and that their acquisition situations are often far from ideal (Mahboob 2005: 63), the subject of this study is probably typical of the global majority. What is relevant in his case may therefore apply to a great many adult L2 learners all around the globe.
5.3.1. Learning materials

Learning materials are of cardinal importance in the L2 acquisition process. Whereas English L2 textbooks produced in the 'inner circle' are sometimes not fully informed by the reality of global L2 teaching and learning practices (Pickering 2006: 226), the subject's textbook is a product of the 'outer circle' and does not seem to have been affected by 'inner circle' pedagogical developments such as the communicative paradigm. Like the subject of this study, many learners and teachers trust that their chosen textbook was informed by absolute expertise and therefore never question its content, sequencing, or methodological approach. Speaking from her experience as a language teacher before she became an editor, Thalia Dorwick says that for many teachers and learners, 'the textbook is the curriculum or the method' (Kaiser 1999: 5), therefore its role in fossilized learning outcomes may be overlooked. Dorwick describes the relationship between L2 teachers, textbook authors, and publishers as follows (Kaiser 1999: 4):

SLA research affects textbooks much less than you would think. Our role is to shape the materials for the marketplace. ... There are some methodological positions that a researcher will take that are antithetical to the needs and perceptions of the marketplace. ... SLA is about acquisition; it's not about teaching. There needs to be a mediation between the researchers and the people who put these theories in place.

The findings of this study point to the need for a critical stance towards learning materials. Independent learners such as the subject should seek help in choosing materials suited to their acquisition aims; and L2 teachers should not rely exclusively on prescribed materials, because, as Van Patten warned, any textbook is 'only a point of departure' (Kaiser 1999: 5).

Choosing suitable materials, however, is not always easy, as there is a vast variety of textbooks on the market, all making competing claims. Pennycook (1994: 156-157) describes the lucrative nature of the international EFL textbook market, in which America and Britain are dominant rivals, and cites evidence that when a new language teaching view can be made to gain ascendancy in Western Applied Linguistics, successful marketing of concomitant publications has major financial implications for their authors and publishers. The findings of this study show that, whatever learning materials are chosen, these should be supplemented with self-developed remedial material based on the persistent linguistic difficulties exhibited by the teacher's own learners.
The subject’s situation also supports the fact that learning materials or opportunities are sometimes beyond the financial reach of learners. Less fossilization might have occurred if the subject had attended extramural English courses or bought more suitable learning materials, but he decided that these were too expensive as he had more pressing financial priorities. The exorbitant fees charged for the conversation classes which he considered attending corroborate the fact that to some, EFL teaching is a lucrative commodity, to the detriment of many learners around the globe. All universities in the UAE require either a certain score in the American TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or in its British rival, the Cambridge-based IELTS (International English Language Testing System) as part of their entrance requirements. In order to prepare successfully for the TOEFL, many UAE learners spend an average of 1500 dirhams for a 50-hour course (often more than once), a further 175 dhs on the preparation manual, 750 dhs for the test fee, and, should they want the set of eight CDs which accompanies the manual, a further 350 dhs: a total of 2775 dhs (roughly R5300). The subject paid similar fees to enable his son and daughter in Syria to qualify for further English medium studies. Pennycook notes that in 1987, test fees alone generated an income of US$14 million for the US-based organization which owns the TOEFL test (1994: 156). Financial constraints on learners and the prices of books are, of course, beyond the control of the L2 teacher, but teachers can try to help or guide learners who might be ignorant of additional learning possibilities to locate suitable or affordable alternatives (library materials, second-hand or donated materials, volunteers who may assist in activities related to English acquisition). If teachers and professional linguists do not engage with community and education authorities on the issue of the learning needs of the less affluent, who will?

The many irregularities, peculiarities and exceptions to rules which characterize the English language often confuse learners and cause repeated errors. Showing an entirely pragmatic approach, most contemporary language textbooks simply present the rules for, or the customary usages of, an item of grammar and provide practice exercises or suggested activities in which it can be used. Many teachers, having been schooled in the same ‘communitarian’ methodological approach, do not know the historical reasons for such linguistic oddities and never find these out for themselves. In the researcher’s experience, Arab learners, perhaps because of the traditional metacognitive approach of their first language learning, often want to know the reasons for what does not seem logical to them in English. After the last data recording session the subject asked for clarification of two peculiarities of the English language which had long puzzled him. He wanted to know the rationale behind English indefinite articles, since Arabic manages very well without these. When it was explained to him that a was a remnant of the ancient North of
England form *ane* (one), he immediately expressed his sudden understanding of where the *n* in *an* comes from, and that in a statement such as *I saw a man*, the fundamental meaning is that *one* man was seen; if this man is further referred to, the definite article represents *the one man which was seen*. This historical details seemed to clarify the point for him entirely. He also wanted to know why the *gh*-cluster in so many English words is either not pronounced (as in *though*) or is labialized as /ʃ/ (as in *enough*), which caused him some spelling and pronunciation insecurities. Meiklejohn's quaint explanation (1897: 326) that the Normans could not articulate the Anglo-Saxon guttural /x/ properly, so that 'the Anglo-Saxon scribe then doubled the signs for his guttural, as a farmer might put up a strong wooden fence to keep his beasts in the fold, but the Norman cleared both with perfect ease and indifference' (and that this spelling has remained ever since), amused the subject very much, because Arabic is characterized by its variety of guttural and velar sounds, some unique to the language. He said that he would always remember this interesting fact, pronounce these letters mentally as /x/ when writing or reading them, but would *jump over that fence* when pronouncing them aloud. This validates the generally held view that adult L2 learners rely on cognitive faculties such as insight and prior knowledge (academic experience and knowledge of the history of their L1), which makes them receptive to an academic approach to L2 learning. One of the roots of persistent errors may therefore be the absolute avoidance in textbooks, and resultant ignorance, of historical facts behind many strange aspects of English which may puzzle adult L2 learners. (Ironically, such historical facts show that some aspects of modern English are themselves the result of historical *lingua franca* grammatical reduction and fossilized errors).

### 5.3.2. Input

Naturalistic discoursal input was found to be one of the main contributors to linguistic fossilization in the subject's situation. Beyond the classroom, the learner is at the mercy of circumstances as to the kind of input he/she is exposed to. The subject was often exposed to grammatically reduced and erroneous L2 speech which contrasted greatly with the formally correct English of his textbook, and to mostly incomprehensible talk of proficient speakers. This case study therefore validates Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Brown 2000: 278): in spite of sustained cognitive-academic learning, fossilization resulted because the learner was exposed to a combination of NS input which was too challenging, and *lingua franca* input which was not challenging enough.

Yet, he related how he had once noticed an L2 error in public: *I see one day I am sure mistake. Now less prices. Some shop for shoes. Yes, they say less prices. I think no, they meaning to say*
low prices or we can say cheap prices, so I ask Indian engineer, he agree to that and say good, N, you can see mistakes. This shows that he had internalized the difference between quantity and quality adjectives, and was beginning to look critically at public L2 input; as he mentioned his colleague’s praise, he must have felt proud of this achievement. Learners should be made aware of the fact that public input is not always exemplary, and that they are not necessarily wrong when they hear more fluent speakers using the language differently. The subject was puzzled at his colleague’s utterance what’s up?, but because he asked the speaker about it, he learned that it is a slang expression not suited to all contexts. The L2 learner should therefore also be encouraged to develop the social confidence to ask proficient speakers of the TL for clarification.

Being an independent learner, the subject of this study was free to choose L2 discourse situations and materials which he found useful to his professional endeavours and which related to his personal tastes. Despite fossilized outcomes of which he was aware, the enjoyment which he gained from folkloric stories and from conversation stimulated further engagement with the L2 and kept his L2 acquisition dynamic in spite of the many shortcomings of his learning situation. This case study illustrates the benefits of a communicative approach to L2 learning and teaching, but also its dangers: when communication is given disproportionate priority over accuracy, fossilized linguistic errors may be the result.

5.3.3. The first language

The most profound insight that the researcher gained from conducting this research was that knowledge of the learner’s first language may aid pedagogical strategies to prevent persistent errors. Lardiere (2003) cautions that studies which analyse interlanguage only in relation to the target grammar may obscure an understanding of the learner’s internally constructed second language knowledge, and thus result in incorrect assessments of such knowledge. If the teacher is informed about the concepts and patterns which underlie the learners’ first language, a better judgement of how learners might intellectually perceive new abstract knowledge can be made, and L2 concepts and patterns may be taught and acquired more effectively. Talking about the L1 in the L2 may shed light on why lessons or explanations sometimes fail to convey knowledge or to eradicate certain errors, as it could provide insight into the schemas of learners. Encouraging adult learners to speak about their first language during speaking tasks may also help them to notice the conceptual differences between the L1 and the L2 and to explore how languages, in spite of grammatical differences, all express the same human experiences.
Furthermore, the subject of this research study failed to achieve authentic L2 phonology; his decision to retain his foreign accent corroborates the pervasive influence of the first language, which has to be reckoned with in L2 learning and teaching; sensitivity should be shown towards learners by respecting such choices.

5.3.4. Cultural issues

The subject’s positive attitudes towards the target language, its speakers and their culture contributed to his continued L2 acquisition in spite of obstacles, which shows that socio-affective variables are vital in L2 learning. Before data collection began, this researcher did not know that the general absence of pets in Arab households is related to Islamic cleanliness prescriptions (it was assumed that this was a matter of general taste), and the subject was not fully aware of the affection and concern which Westerners generally feel for animals. Such ignorance could encourage prejudice and thereby contribute to negative L2 teaching and learning outcomes. This small detail shows that mutual cultural understanding should be fostered in acquisition situations by discussing these matters. Learners may puzzle about certain things they perceive in the target culture, but a chauvinistic or indifferent attitude from the teacher or from native speakers may prevent them from asking questions, cause negative affective undercurrents, and hamper the L2 acquisition process. However, if a community allows persons from foreign cultures to teach in its educational institutions, authorities should also make a concerted effort to ensure that teachers are fully aware of pertinent socio-cultural issues beforehand; something which, in this researcher’s experience, does not always happen.

5.3.5. Native-speaker issues

In keeping with the current Western climate of respecting diversity instead of labelling what does not match up to First World standards as *inferior*, calls have been made in the field of ESL acquisition to redefine the benchmarks against which ESL outcomes have so often been labelled as substandard. Nonetheless, the descriptor ‘nonnative’ prevailed in the literature perused for this research, which gives some validity to Y. Kachru’s claim that SLA research to date has suffered from a monolingual bias (1994: 798). Persistent ‘nonnative-like’ L2 outcomes are often automatically labelled as fossilized, implying inability, which prompted Mahboob’s accusation that ‘SLA experts propagate regimes of truth’ (Mahboob 2005: 72). The findings of this study affirm Talebinezhad’s observation (2001:3) that native-like proficiency is not the ultimate objective of many, and perhaps most, second language learners and speakers of English; the subject of this research had no wish to ‘think Englishly’ (Pennycook 1994: 133), which confirms that most adult
learners acquire their L2 for specific purposes while their mother tongue remains their 'plaything' and means of self-expression (Pennycook: 133). The subject set himself the target of being able to communicate in his L2, in which he succeeded, as none of the fossilization identified in his output impeded transfer of meaning or message. However, if measured by 'native-speaker' standards, most of his linguistic output would be judged as failed; in the words of Patkowski (1980: 464), he would certainly not 'pass for native'.

The descriptors 'nonnative' and 'fossilized' have both been criticized for their emphasis on negativity and inability in L2 learning outcomes. After examining the acquisition situation of the subject of this study, this researcher can better understand the rationale behind such criticisms, and 'why colleagues at times appear emotional about this topic' (Selinker 1993: 22). The subject's L2 achievements after only four years of part-time, unguided L2 learning in an acquisition situation which is far from ideal, are, in short, admirable. His situation exemplifies the conundrum about standards of ultimate attainment in SLA which Nickel raises (1998: 9):

The world, our countries, our communities will survive with faulty pronunciation and less than perfect grammar, but can we be sure that they will continue to survive without real communication?

On the other hand, this research also finds that considerations of political correctness currently being advocated in SLA may not always touch learners as deeply as theorists think they do; concerning the pejorative connotations which the term 'nonnative speaker' holds for some, the subject pointed out that the native speaker of the target language is viewed by the L2 learner as a nonnative speaker of the learners' first language (if he/she can speak it at all). Apart from monolingual and fully bi- or multilingual speakers, all speakers are, after all, 'native' and 'nonnative' speakers at the same time.

5.3.6. Error treatment

Although it may be a somewhat complicated and time-consuming activity, quantifying the most persistent errors in each learner's output over a certain period, then establishing which of these appear most commonly in the group's output, may give invaluable insight into communal acquisition difficulties, which could then inform subsequent pedagogical procedures. Too often assessment outcomes are merely quantified according to answer keys and prescribed rubrics and entered in the mark book, which does not provide meaningful insight into why learners repeatedly battle with certain material during the acquisition process.
Antokhin found that global and local fossilized errors often overlap, making it difficult to decide how to respond to such errors (Antokhin 2000: 13). The findings of this study suggest that this may not necessarily be the case. Once clear criteria for fossilized errors have been formulated, any excerpt from the learner’s output can be analysed accordingly. For example, the subject made the following utterance: *I find died, the bird died, from that horrible cat. And he not eating that bird! Just we can say morderer, not mother to kill for food her babies, that day I begin hate all cats.* Failure to conjugate the verb *begin* in past tense contexts was labelled a *fossilized error,* therefore it should therefore receive priority; the learner should practise the correct form in easy sentential contexts. Should Simple Past tense conjugation be found to be a global error (in that its wrong use results in communication breakdown), or a fossilizing error (in that errors outweigh their correct versions), this grammatical category should be revised with the learner and he/she should be encouraged to memorize past tense verb forms. In the subject’s case, the excerpt above shows three errors with required Simple Past forms (*find, not eating, begin*); this constitutes a fossilizing structure, which requires clarification and relearning. As a quick scanning of any one of his transcribed conversations shows, he often resorted to the *lingua franca* strategy of supplying the past tense semantically instead of grammatically (*first, in Syria, I learn little English*), therefore this compensatory habit should be addressed. Overlapping local and global erroneousness (repeatedly wrong discrete items which at the same time represent wrongly internalized grammatical concepts and/or impede message) may thus both be treated remedially.

### 5.3.7. The psychological dimension

Teachers often view a group of learners as a homogenous entity because they are of the same age, level of learning (class or grade), cultural or L1 background, and consequently follow a ‘one size fits all’ teaching approach. This study shows how intricate the reasons for fossilization may be in each individual learner’s case; each learner brings a unique combination of learning history, societal circumstances, understanding of the world, learning abilities, aims and motives to the classroom; if learners are encouraged to talk and write about these, some understanding of the *roots* of their persistent errors may be formed, which could further inform pedagogical strategies.

As the subject’s admirable acquisition effort against many odds demonstrates, learners, young or old, should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. The subject took the responsibility for his occasional failures, often blaming his own lack of effort, and could therefore understand the reasons for some of his fossilized and fossilizing linguistic errors. In spite of the disadvantages of his situation, he persisted due to positively internalized motivation, and became capable of broadening his linguistic capacity by means of L2 materials and by engaging with
other speakers of the TL. Teachers should encourage learners to develop such positive values, as additional-language learning is a hard path if no positive affective dimension is present (MacIntyre 1995: 96).

The subject's pride in his first language reminded the researcher that every adult L2 learner, in spite of sometimes lamentable L2 outcomes, is an expert in his/her first language. This fact should be acknowledged in L2 teaching in order to counter ebbing linguistic self-esteem when acquisition outcomes are disappointing, because, as this research study shows, the affective and motivational dimensions of the acquisition process are vital to continued learning and eventual success. Therefore, this researcher disagrees with the complete avoidance of the first language which L2 teaching approaches such as the Direct Method prescribe. The first language is probably the most dominant entity in the L2 learner's mental schema, therefore ignoring linguistic expertise built up over decades belittles the adult learner as an individual. It should not be forgotten that in first language acquisition (by which such methods were informed) the learner (child) is free to engage with the language spontaneously — including completely wrong language and childish nonsense language — while acquisition steadily takes place; why should the L2 learner be prohibited from referring to, or sometimes using, the L1 in negotiating understanding of alien concepts and linguistic materials?

Rote learning has negative behaviouristic connotations in the western academic world, yet the literary critic George Steiner has lamented the 'catastrophic decline of memorization in our own modern education' which implies, in his view, that there is nothing worth memorizing in our culture (Pennycook 1994: 163). Education authorities in the UK are currently even considering abolishing all forms of school tests and exams until learners reach the age of 16, also because of the stress which memorization and recall efforts cause learners (No More Exams? Khaleej Times: 14 June 2007, p. 17). Memorizing features prominently in Arabic education and is an admired skill in the Middle East; persons of all ages take part in popular competitions in which long sections of, or the entire Qur'an, is recited. It is remarkable how Arab schoolchildren prefer to, and how well they can, learn many pages of information by rote, then reproduce sentences, paragraphs and whole passages verbatim during tests. When combined with insight, the result, in this researcher's experience, can be excellent. This is the educational tradition in which the subject was schooled, therefore it is understandable that he blamed some of his faulty outcomes on his insufficient memorizing efforts. It cannot be denied that second language acquisition necessitates memorization in addition to input, therefore a lack of emphasis on this aspect of learning may, as this research has found, result in fossilization.
5.3.8. Romancing the fossil?

Thirty-five years after the introduction of the term 'fossilization' to the field of Applied Linguistics there is no unanimous acceptance of any single aspect of the construct; validity of the term itself is disputed, while the phenomena it denotes continue to make teachers' lives a misery. The prime relevance of the term in SLA lies in its association with strongly persistent errors which signify serious learning difficulties or obstacles; but since 'strongly persistent errors' (or 'most persistent errors') is already a clear enough appellation, is a metaphorical term really necessary, especially since it generates such controversy?

The controversy surrounding fossilization seems to this researcher mostly due to logomachy (contention about words or in words merely) and not to uncertainty about what exists or does not exist in the reality of SLA. Birdsong (2003: 2) writes of his reluctance to embrace a 'protean, catch-all term like fossilization', and writes that the 'ensnarlement in textured lexical semantics' which it invariably causes makes it an imprecise term of debatable utility in L2 acquisition research.

The most consistent criticism of the term concerns the permanence of error (petrification) implied by the term. This study found that it was not possible to predict that anything in the subject's output would remain fossilized for any length of time, because future events cannot be foreseen. Fossilized errors were therefore defined as 'relatively permanent', but such a definition is paradoxical and at odds with what the metaphor implies. The problem may not merely be that a biological concept is used to refer to a linguistic phenomenon, but that the metaphor is used selectively: dimensions of the biological concept which do not fit the linguistic phenomenon are sometimes ignored or discarded, which causes conceptual contradictions amongst applied linguists. Biological fossilization is irreversible, but linguistic fossilization, apparently, is not; should fossils have been called 'fossils' in the first place if they can be 'detossilized' (an illogical term)? Whereas biological fossilization occurs over millions of years, Selinker (1993: 38) questions whether linguistic fossilization is an abrupt event or a gradual process. Although metaphors can provide user-friendly understandings of intricate concepts, Lakoff and Turner (1989) warn against their persuasive power in conceptual thinking: we are predisposed to accept the validity of a metaphor because it captures an easily visualized picture, therefore we do not always detect the differences between the 'picture' and the more intricate abstract concept.

What may further add to the confusion is the mixing of metaphors in the fossilization field. Brown (2000: 231-232) cautions against seeing fossilization as a terminal illness in spite of the
‘forbidding’ nature of the metaphor, and suggests cryogenation as a better alternative, because ‘the freezing process may then be reversed’. Yet he also suggests botanical ecology as a more appropriate theoretical model for SLA (pp. 294-296). Butler-Tanaka (2000) feels that there may be a ‘cure’ for fossilization in grammatical consciousness-raising; fossilization is said to be a learning plateau (Flynn and O’Neil: 1988) or a ‘de-acceleration of the learning process’ (Washburn: 1991) (cited in Han 2004a: 25); interlanguage ‘behaves like a chameleon’ (Lin 2003: 440); MacWhinney refers to fossilization of dance style as an analogical process and posits the parasitic nature of the L2 as a cause of fossilization, in that the L1 and L2 ‘compete for territory on the map of learning’ (MacWhinney 2005: 19-21). Tollefson and Firn preferred to use the term fossilization to refer to ‘the permanent state’ and jellyification to refer to ‘the reversible condition’ (cited in Purdy 2001: 4); ‘stage seepage’ may promote fossilization (Lardiere 1998: 5), Selinker describes a continuum ‘from soft to hard fossilization’ (1993: 19), and fossilized errors are often pronounced eradicated. While fossilization implies termination of life, some authors include fluctuation (a definite sign of life) in their definition of the linguistic construct. In order to eliminate such conflicting metaphorical descriptions, definition of the phenomenon should perhaps be limited to academically neutral terms (such as persistent errors), or to a metaphor which can apply throughout (such as, this researcher would then suggest, radicated errors). Either of these approaches could contribute to better treatment of deeply entrenched erroneousness in SLA in that conflicting perspectives engendered by selective and contradictory metaphorical descriptions may be prevented.

5.4. Conclusion

This study has detailed the unique nature of one learner’s SLA experience and of the influences which impact on individual additional language learning. It presents evidence that fossilization in adult L2 learning is caused by temporary combinations of causal variables and suggests that L2 pedagogues should take more cognizance of the wide range of factors which continually influence the efforts of their individual learners. The findings suggest that treatment will not succeed if a causal link is assumed between fossilized errors and only one linguistic or extra-linguistic factor. Teachers and learners alike should keep the old adage errare est humanum in mind, and approach fossilization not as ‘petrified’ learning failures and inabilities, but as signs which show how to proceed further on the road of L2 learning and teaching. Hopefully, this study has made a contribution towards a better interpretation of such signs.
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Appendix A

Oral survey conducted in Abu Dhabi in May 2006. Ten ESL teachers were asked the following question and gave permission for their answers to be printed.

**Question:** What is *fossilization* in second language?

**Responses:**

M: I don't know, I'm not sure.


D: Something like, English, French ... Remnants. Remnants of language.

C: That's cute! Fossils are... dead ... stone ... Useless. Pointless?

S: A dead language? Like Latin. Right?

V: OK, let me think ... lifeless... fixed phrases. Fixed expressions. I'm not sure?

S: *Fossilization*? ... OK. Maybe obsolete terms, outdated stuff.

J: Something about learning, regurgitating, the same errors, repeating errors.

L: Blimey. What?

G: I think that refers to language which doesn't change. Can't change.
APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B1: Monologue self-recorded by the subject on 15 April 2006

You asked me to talk in English, and I see you have written about seven marks as a subject what I must talk. But that is very difficult for me, I will try to talk what I can. Because language English is not easy for me; that true, uh, my age about forty eight years, I didn’t, uh, I never teach English good. There isn’t a special school to teach English, and also, there is not teacher who can learn or teach English good to that student, and in the street we cannot, we didn’t use this language, because we didn’t need that. There isn’t any people, foreign, uh, people who meet them in the street to talk with them and traveling is very different, uh, difficult, to us. That because, uh, cost too much money and that very difficult for many reasons. But in my school in Syria we talk English little, of language English, from simple books, yes; that happened.

I, uh, I came from Syria to Emirates for two reasons. The first, I want to leave my town. That because I became sick from the, uh, society, and who around me; so I decide I must travel. For the time, or the period which I must travel, I didn’t decide that; one month, two months, one year, ten years, I didn’t decide. Second reason, that I must work, of course, because I need money; I must send money to my children, that my duty about them.

Yes, that happened. First thing, um, I meet, uh, met, a man from Iraq, want to open office as consultant, then I begin with him. But that man very busy from, uh, in his job, so can’t uh help me get my road, anything. And I haven’t experience in this country, with the people, so I need someone understand this society, understand where I must go to end my work, continue my work, but that was very difficult for me. I didn’t smoke, I tried and work hard and hard for two years to complete what I need to learn, what I need, as uh, computer programs, municipality, town planning department, something about that. But at the time I begin to feel I am [ ] far, of who, of uh whom I loved them, and habit uh to uh live with them, same my friends. I begin to mees, to miss to my town and my people, to uh the memory of my life in my town, my country. Then I begin a new feeling, I mean I begin to feel a new, a new feeling that prevailed of myself. Eight months I sit in my room, didn’t went, didn’t go to uh any place, as a hotel, to drink, just to a small coffee shop to drink coffee. After that begin I go to Rotana Hotel, to meet people, I like beer; yes, it is very good and [ ] that place in Rotana Hotel that called Trader Vic’s, all, but uh same uh my friend uh talk about the price of the beer, it is expensive for us, because uh my salary is very little at the time. I must pay rent for a room and must uh live, and must drink, and must send money to my family also; so my salary is very very little and not enough to spend all this uh need. At this point I begin to understand this life is very difficult in this country, and I must begin to think uh what the important for me and uh what I must do; if I will uh stay here in this country that mean I will spend all my life for nothing; and society very strange; relation between the people is very strange. Everyone afraid from the other. Also I didn’t find good friend,
to talk with him, about the reality my feeling, about what I feel as really about this uh country and job and the life.

I had take a room in Sanaya in Al Ain. The rent was uh about uh five hundred. But there isn't water in the building; I must buy water uh every three days, about 400 gallons; uh, tank must come to fill my uh, roof tank, and must pay money, I didn't remember, maybe twenty dirham, maybe thirty, but uh, I think water not clean. Because there are two places to get water; one clean and uh water, price of water is very expensive, for who trade, who sell water, get money. Then they will fill their tanks from cheap one, that used for building, for something, to clean, to clean Al Ain city. Many days in my room I uh, sit without water, because the water in my tank suddenly finished, so I want to fill it but uh, who will fill it to me? I can't get water, only in uh, some time. Same uh at twelve o' clock afternoon, but that time um I must be in my work. So I tried to solve this problem; I said to the man who filled to me every time, if I didn't in uh the home, he can fill to me my tank; he said okay, and, very good, I will help you, no problem, just phone to me, then I will come. But that man begin to steal my money in this manner. Many times I came to the, my room, to uh, to uh, then, I didn't find water after uh I asked him to fill, he many times said yes and I came to my room then suddenly I didn't find, then asked him why you didn't fill my tank, he said no I filled, I put water in your tank but maybe you forget something open in your uh bathroom, kitchen, then the water flow out, and flow out. But that, uh yes, that happened many times. I think, no I'm sure, that man is liar. First time I think yes maybe I forget something. I begin to uh care about this problem and before I went from my room I look to all things in kitchen, in bathroom, and close everything then asked him to fill something, many times. That man from Syria. Also I'm from Syria. Money nothing good. But what I must do to prevail this man to thief my money or to solve this problem? I must change the place. Where I will go? To anywhere water reach to it, but inside of the city, inside of the market, that will cost too much money and I can't. Uh, I talk too much about this simple problem, but this uh first thing make terrible to me in this country.

Second problem in my life in this country, the lonely. So I decide I must find a friend. But who that friend uh which I must find him, and uh man or woman, I didn't think with woman, with a lady, to live with her or to live with me, to spend time together; no, I'm happy with my time, I drink beer, my beer in Rotana then I will go to my room, then I will switch on my radio and put it near to my ear and listen to nice music, good music uh which I like, and sleep good, then will wake up early to go to my work; my food good, my dress nice, and send money to my family every month, fifty percent from my salary. Lonely is very difficult. I need someone to talk with him, far of our problem in this country about the life, about everything. I want to laugh with him, I want, I want to feel human, really human live in this life, not alone, no friend, no family, uh no money; nothing. But uh English lang, language is very difficult for me, because I didn't meet a lot of people in this country at this time, so I need to teach English. I bought uh a simple book from the market and begin to teach English from the first letter. I tried too much. Then I kept uh knowledge about the English but haven't any practice. Where I will, with who I will talk, if I didn't, I work alone, sit alone, drink beer alone? [ laughs ] With the driver of taxi? He isn't foreign man - or he can't talk English also – and that
not necessary for him or for me to say, please to Rotana Hotel, just Rotana, this Arabic word. Or international word. I decide I must find a lady as a friend. To spend time. But I can't spend money for her. There are many ladies need a friend to spend money for them, but those ladies, they not a friend. Those play, and are liars. Same, uh, and uh they came to this country to work, to work, with the relation. They will sell love, who needs. I need, but didn't buy love from them, because I'm not liar, that work with the love. I tried hard; then I went to, I changed the Rotana, Trader Vic's, and go to Hilton and Cave and what that, Continental, International, I don't know, but also same people, not different, who I meet him in Rotana I meet him in Continental and I begin to think Al Ain really a small city, and there a little of people live in it, not same Aleppo city from my country; if you will meet one you will not meet him long time because it is big city and many places, and cheap. I talk too much about beer also. Because this material, this drinking, the main reason to meet you. We meet together because we want to drink beer.
APPENDIX B2: Conversation recorded on 12 May 2006

R      Let's talk about English, OK?
N      OK. I like English.
R      Why?
N      I think it have, uh, it has nice sound, friendly sound. More soft of Arabic. Also, uh, English language have strong position in the life, uh, useful, prevail of many things, computer, films, uh technology, knowledge strong of, uh, to, understand many things of, about America, that, that, between countries, government of uh countries...
R      Do you mean politics?
N      Yes, I mean that, politics of today, of the world.
R      Why, where did you begin to learn English?
N      We never have English in Syria, because British never prevailed of our country. In secondary school we can to choose some of French or English. I choice English because I did not like the French people, how they use before of our country.
R      How long did you study English?
N      Five years, yes, that five years. Only little classes, simple books. I didn't listen the teacher; first one she very young, very beautiful, from Lebanon, I look at her and listen her voice but not uh, accept her knowledge too much. But I was a good student, and study hard for that exam every time, and get easy remarks, high remarks. Second lady, come from Iraq, she horrible like a uh, uh ...excuse me (uses electronic dictionary). Like a witch. Her nose long, her eyes black, her dress black, she narrow, uh, long, angry every time. Teachers in English in Syria not good, because they learn English not correct, learn uh from Arab school or places.
R      Did you learn a lot of grammar?
N      Yes, we learn too much grammar, every time, uh, from verbs, nouns, what that, past tense, like that. You have, you had, you having. And explain everything in Arabic. I learn, but I didn't understand what I learn, I mean, uh, not give my attention, my mind, just accept to have that, to uh study that, will finish and leave that study. I wanted to become director in cinema, in Italy. My father will not let me uh, to go, he will control me, uh, to take, to live the traditional life. I the youngest son, he loved me too much, he afraid I will go and never come back to Syria. Oh, sometimes I hate my father for that ...
R      And university? Any English?
N      No, everything in Arabic.
R      What do you think of the English people you see and meet here?
N      They good, very nice, I see, friendly, talk too much loud, sometimes in Trader Vic's that British mens sounding like twenty donkeys [laughs], everyone will hear their talking, loud sound of uh, greeting, haw, haw!
R      You have British and American English listening tapes. Which accent do you prefer?
I like all. American sometimes more uh, specification, uh, sound like letters, uh, I didn't, I couldn't, uh, what I mean, like (thinks) American will say teacher with r you can hear, same spelling, in British not hear, uh, not found that sound – teach-uh, not same you read her letters.

Would you prefer to sound like an American, or like a British person?

[laughs] I don't want to sound like Mr Bush or Condi or Tony Blair! I am Arabic man, Sunni, North Syria, Aleppo, why I will sound like other man. My mouth make sounds like I learn from my society, my mother, my father. I will try to speak English good, to be understand by the other, uh, that I can. Why American and British not sound the same, they worry about that? They all English. Scottish, Irlanda, that one I hear say thank you very MOOCH, other say MUCH, they happy with that. So I happy to give sound of Arab. I can say GEW HEWM (laughs) but easier for me to say GOH HOM, that how I speak English. I am sorry!

No problem! I understand everything you say quite clearly.

In Arabic I not a simple man – but English, uh, I become like the baby.
B3: Conversation recorded on 15 June 2006

R       Please tell me about how you have been studying English.

N       OK. First, in Syria, I learn little English in the school. That not much. But I remember later some of that, when I uh, begin to study her again. Then, I work in Saudi Arabia and begin to study the programmes for computer. Uh, how I need for my job. Autocad, Photoshop – we find all in Arabic, interface Arabic, everything, uh, but I begin to study books from programme in Arabic, then use all uh, how you say, click this, click that one, delete, insert, rotate, all controls in English. Also, I begin to read or translate from my work other things, from that library, for my job, like names of materials, building specifications, to measure, plannings. Because I begin in Saudi to work alongside engineers from India, they good, very clever, speak little Arabic and work everything in English. I feel uh, that not correct to every time someone must come, to help, uh, to translate for me and that engineer everything. Then, I went back to work in Syria, and forget about that. But when I came to Emirates, suddenly I need more of English, not too much, but engineers Indian, Philippino, maybe Iran.

R       Don't you understand people from Iran?

N       No! They use same letters Arabic, but uh, their language uh, call Farsi. No, it same English and French, same letters, I mean same alphabet, not same words. Some little, maybe, sound little same.

R       OK. So, you needed more English?

N       Yes, then I buy small simple book from the market and begin to learn words, make sentences, not same for my work; uh, for my work I need name of things, that important. Uh, I will say, uh, OK (thinks) hal tareed concrete specifications? And he will say, nam, OK, give, wen measures. You understand? But now I decide to learn more uh, uh, how make the long sentence and story, like now I speak to you.

R       So how did you do that?

N       OK. I use many things. My simple English grammar book, read, uh copy, say loud sound many times same thing, to remember it. Uh, write some words to see if I can remember what uh, what I see, I saw before my eyes when I study. Also, I look at TV; I like English cinema but oh, my eyes too busy to follow that words they write on the pictures, uh, I not always listen to sound! Or look at pictures! I read, uh, busy with Arabic.

R       Subtitles?

N       Yes, Yes, that words on the pictures. But I listen sound how they speak and uh, say those words every time. Also, I hear uh listen radio. I like too much Arabic music, not like English music, some uh too hard? Not feeling, more loud, uh, like angry person? But listen sometimes uh to Radio 101, that English from Dubai. I speak little and more with engineers in the work; I listen when I go to Trader Vic's, hear those English and Americans talk, sometimes hallo, hallo, how are you, but I
sorry I couldn't speak more. Same you first time when you speak with me, I couldn't know, uh understand your speaking!

R Go on?

N I take from library very nice, very good book for understand the English grammar better. It from Mahmoud Omar, for Arab learners. It begin with sentence: how to make a sentence. Uh, how to ask question, to tell him or her to do, uh, what to do. Too much about verb, tenses, but I like that, I feel I understand how, uh, the English language, uh, working. I like to understand, then, uh, now I learn slowly more words, more, uh, to say better my meaning. Excuse me, my English here difficult. Same you will build home; all home foundation, walls, roof, inside to life. But this home family will make nice, beautiful colours, swimming pool, I don't know what. Other family will come, their home like for old people, like my grandmother, uh, simple, dark, not many things in the rooms. I mean, I understand how looking, looked the English language, maybe same you understand her, uh, yes, that, but that your English more nice, uh more we can say beautiful than of my English.

R That's a nice way to explain ... to explain the difference ... but your meaning is clear.

N Also, yes, some poems in Arabic, I think uh from, of all languages, they know to say their meaning in very beautiful words, that you understand everything they thinking and see how they see, that not for everyone to do. There is one poem, Syria man, old man, talk about how standing, he standing, uh, on the side of Neel, Neel river, looking and say uh all this, all old uh broken stones, big buildings, where those build that, where that now all people forget them, and uh river Neel will flow and flow and what that, all nothing. Nothing. All big plans and king and for what, they all uh forgetting (thinks) forgot from the people. I mean to say all the people forget them, forget their big plans.

R Yes ...

N I remember that time, first time you speak to me, and ask me about that building. I say no, I don't know, because uh I cannot talk about that in English! Because you say English name, what that?

R Oh, yes ... Krak des Chevaliers?

N Yes, we call Qalat al Hosen, and I become too afraid, how I, how will I explain my meaning for this lady, too many times I go, sorry, I, we went to this building, near Homs, that near the sea, to see, uh, building from old Europe people, not same Palmyra, that from Rome, but for you, uh to you I could not say, I was afraid to say anything, so I ... said no, I didn't know what you talk about.

R What you thought, how this man architect from Syria and not knowing that building!

N Yes, I remember. I saw that you were shy to speak ...

N Not easy in English for me!
APPENDIX B4: Conversation recorded on 31 August 2006

R  May I ask you some more questions about English?
N  Of course. I like that.
R  Why haven't you joined a study group, evening classes, to do a course in English?
N  That happened one time. I will talk about that. Yes, uh, I decide to go to place in Al Ain, I sorry I can't remember that name; a man from Syria tell told me about that place. English International, uh, in Al Ain. To take lessons with speaking, reading, to get better English. Yes, that happened, I went to that place and find uh, it very expensive, one thousand dirhams for two weeks, every night two hours. And must buy a book. What, book to speak! I become afraid from that and say to that Indian man, who will teach me, the, the, what that lady, malika .... one moment ... the queen of British? He angry and think I am not a polite man. Then I say, I will pay for you tomorrow when I get salary. He say no uh, then begin lessons tomorrow, not this day. I say, good, then I wait some small time and see who will come to this class. I see, uh three young boys and lady, they go to that class; Emeratis; excuse me, I am grandfather ...
R  Really? I didn't know that.
N  Yes, my first uh, oldest daughter Sireen she have small baby.
R  OK, I interrupted you. Please continue.
N  No problem. Yes, how I can sit with young boys when I grandfather? What I will talk with them and to make mistakes and maybe uh they think uh to think what this old man sit with us. Also I see that, those people thief other people, other people who need some English but how you can pay so much, what is this. Uh, I decide to see the teacher. I wait and wait. The teacher is a man, young man, I see English or maybe from America, then uh I decide no, I am old man, what I will sit to talk with all young people. And a group, no, that is not good for me.
R  I see, OK. Do you read any English books? Newspapers?
N  Not much, uh maybe some time. I read grammar book from Omar, also some simple easy books as for the babies. I read from Grimm's brothers, many stories I think from German, and like very much how these stories, uh how telling and uh, no. I like the story of the cat and the mouse. How that stupid mouse, she trust too much the cat, how can you trust that one nature make for the animal her, uh to will kill her. But sometimes, yes, I look to see newspapers, but the English is too difficult. Then sometimes I sit with Z and we look news, maybe CNN or Fox, also not understand all but I like sound, I learn sound, of their talking. When I see uh what happening, as bombs in Iraq, I understand what they talk but uh not uh every word. But (laughs) Z become angry from me because his wife really have or has no English and she want to know every time what they say, she will know everything, then Z say to me, go N, you will make some lady problems for me with your learning of English. I don't have TV, I don't like that, uh just to sit and sit and also my eyes become so tired. Sometimes I read some English from office, some things, papers, also of course I see and study from computer programs, but I cannot say that is good for to learn grammar
correct. I like to read in the street, names, shops, banks, that uh signs of names and all Arabic, to see how same in English; I see one day I am sure uh mistake. Now less prices. Some shop for shoes. Yes, they say less prices. I think, no, they meaning to say low prices or we can say cheap prices, so I ask Indian engineer, he agree to that, and say good, N, you can see mistakes. That man will say every time in office Hallo N what's up, first I said what you mean S? What I will say? He say sorry said no, same how are you, but not we can use polite, not for polite, that for young, for easy uh amongst the people. Also from him I learn gulliwalli, good word from Pakistan people, to say no problem or perhaps don't worry, or some like we can forget, this not important.

R  OK, thank you.
APPENDIX B5: Conversation recorded on 22 September 2006

N  I will tell you about zarzur, from my country.

R  OK. What is zarzur?

N  He is a bird who live in my country. He is small, and make hard, uh loud sound when he need something, like what he will eat or uh to find his friend. He is black, black with white uh, pictures, uh places, one moment please (uses electronic dictionary) with white spots on her body. Before, we have in Syria too much of zarzur. In winter my country is very cold, in our villages there sometimes snow and oh, too much cold. Then zarzur will fly in the night, when the sun go down, he will fly and to look, uh he see in the villages the houses with warm of light and he look for the open window and will fly in to that house.

R  That's sweet!

N  No! Not sweet! Why the people they open her window for zarzur? To catch her, to eat her. They, old people from time before, they need her meat, they simple and poor, they, one moment (uses electronic dictionary) peasants, poor. So they make the fires and open the windows and that will make zarzur to fly in. They hungry for her meat.

R  Do people still do this?

N  No, they stop, stopped, to eat this bird. Because there no, uh, little, small number of this bird, and I think now too much light of electricity, everywhere light. But I think, yes, not many zarzur now. I will tell you what I see, I saw, one day when I a small boy. I sitting on the roof, roof of the house of my father, and I see how zarzur she fly in a window, they open window, I cry no! No! But she will find the end of her life because the people planned to eat her, for their food.

R  Why were you sitting on the roof?

N  Another story that, from that uh, I mean about young boy and making problems. My father give (thinks) gave for me money and said, go to the market, buy some this, that, I don't know what, food, something. I go, I meet my friends in the road and we uh we spend all that money from my father ... I want to be rich man, my friends will say, look, look, N so rich, so strong in the life, we want to be same N.

R  So, when you got home?

N  My father say go! Get out! You are a bad son! Then I become angry from him and go, uh up the roof and sit, will sit all the night on the roof, from dark. I hear them call to me, N, N, where are you? They cry, oh, he is death, oh he is running away from us, oh oh ... I laugh, I'm happy to see this. Then I see, in light of when sun go down, how that zarzur flying into that house, poor house from uh of neighbours on other side of the street. How they open windows, I hear zarzur, I see this. I think too much. How human he want to feel that good, warm, but we can say he will meet his death, no uh, meet what he did not want, some cruel, some terrible, not what he wanted. Same this bird.

R  You made your father unhappy too.
N  Yes, I am sorry to say, young boy is like animal, no mind, have no mind, just feel about himself, not feel for other person. *Ye kareem*, but every boy will grow to become a man, and will begin think, to think, about this life.

R  That's true.

N  I think now of stories, old stories in Arabic, *Kalila wa Dimna*. Two brothers, fox, fox-es, very good stories I think from Indian, come also from Iran some time, long time before, but become the Arab folklore because they very beautiful in Arab language, Arabic language, all children know this and like this.

R  Tell me more?

N  Yes. That from this stories, these stories, old stories, the children learn many things. How they must use their thinking, how their life, the life, uh, many times, not good, people not good, the stories will learn about some, some facts in the life. The king, I think India, have three sons and they will not study. The king become afraid his sons will have no mind, stupid like donkeys. The teacher of the sons, old man, old man with good mind, uh write (thinks) written the stories of *Kalila wa Dimna* to show, to learn, uh teach, teach them but he will use the animals; he will not say, look, the king is stupid, no, he will make that king animal, lion, and oh, you will cry if you see how that Dimna, that bad fox brother, how he liar too many times, his liar of, of, oh, you will feel sorry for the king, trusting every time the stories of that bad fox, his clever liars. *Kalila* is a good fox, I mean a good brother, every time he will help to solve the problem coming from the liars of Dimna, to save the king, and some other animals.

R  That sounds like some of our stories. Tell me, why do some people tell so many lies?

N  That old and very nice, very good stories, they tell us, tell us the liar, that from the nature; not this or other reasons, different reasons he is liar, he tell liars. Only we can say his nature. Like that fox Dimna. Oh, he is so clever, clever from bad mind, I will try to find for you some in English language.

R  That will be great.

N  It, there one story, of the [thinks] bull; that animal will pull the uh, heavy, uh I don't know, heavy to put bags, transport all things, I think here rice, he fall uh he fell into the sand, that soft sand, cannot get out and will go down. How that Dimna running around and run to the king, to tell the king that animal came to make this trap for the king, telling all the time this to the king, look, look, how that bull fall now where he make trap for the king. The bull cannot move, the king believe all the liars. Happen horrible things.

R  And then?

N  The good brother *Kalila* come, he came, did hear his bad brother talk to some bad friend, *Kalila* will solve all the problems with the true, the correct, when he did suddenly understand what Dimna doing for that bull.

R  Did the bull die?
N  No, and we can say for two reasons: Kalila did hear, did understand, suddenly and solve the problems, with the liars. And for the children, the stories for the children; the animal will not be death, the children will become too terrible from that; they must become sad, to worry that the animal will death, but they must not feel the sadness from the, he really death, they will cry too much from that. So the children must understand, uh, see how the life will be, some bad, some good. Not to death and killing.

R  Very interesting! Thank you.

N  OK. Thank you.
APPENDIX B6: Conversation recorded on 12 October 2006

N  Do you know who that famous lady Umm Kalsum?
R  No?
N  I brought for you cassette with one song. Please to listen now, I am sorry, her song too long! But you must listen and uh I will tell you, explain that.
R  OK. (The cassette is played; the song lasts about 15 minutes.) What was that! What a beautiful voice! Please tell me more.
N  Yes, of course. Oh, she is the most famous, we can say in Arabic language uh culture she is number one. You can not accept how she famous, of all Arabic countries and people love, oh love her too much. She is died, a few years before, and that day all of Egypt people do nothing, uh not go to work, all Cahira, all of Egypt stopped to cry, cry, listen all her music, and all newspapers only Umm Kalsum, Umm Kalsum.
R  Tell me more?
N  Yes. She from very poor family, village in Egypt, her father farmer. But also her father he was the we can say singer in the mosque. He have only this girl and begin to teach her to sing from Koran. And all the people beginning to say, what this beautiful singing of Koran, uh small girl with that strong voice. Then a young man, he was poem, asked many times her father, to she will sing his poems, what he have [thinks] has written, songs, words. Then long time after he prevail and her father say yes, OK. Oh, too fast she became famous; because uh that poem he write, no, written, very good and uh beautiful songs for her to sing. And every time a new song — you see, very long music! — come on the radio, they have many days talk on the radio, on newspapers, about what this song will bring, how music I mean in, in, instructions they will play the music, guitarra, org, I don't know...
R  Do you mean the music instruments?
N  Yes, correct; thank you; how they will make, uh will bring this new song, uh different, instruments and story, words. She stand all time still to sing, hold small cloth in her hand, not move her body, only her hands, her head, to feel what is she singing.
R  Did she have a large band? Many musicians?
N  Yes, maybe twenty, twenty-five, guitarra we call oud, that small one of small uh high sound, you call violin? Violin? One like org, also uh drums, some other.
R  What did she sing about in the song on the tape?
N  She sing for a man; that man she loved; that man sometimes going away, not behave good, make her to, uh... her heart will break; she say, my glass is empty same my life. Some drops they fall in that glass, but she cannot drink that drops, they of salt taste, she cry for love, like the wine uh sweet, what she want. Also say that of pain, her life with him too much pain but she love him and uh when he go away, more pain, that stronger pain. You can hear that pain she feel in her sound? But strong sound because she uh, it strong love she feel.
Did she get married?

Umm Kulsum, too famous, too busy with her music and travel. Maybe she love with that poem, they work for many years everyday together. It is true, one man, he was son of king of Egypt, he ask to marry her; then the family of the king say, no, if you marry that lady who not from king family, you get out of this family, uh to get no money and lose all things. So he stop that plan. Some time the king ask her to sing in the palace for his family, some important Eid, a special day for his family, she say NO. NO for the king! Oh ho, she strong lady because from village life hard.

So, did she never marry?

I think no, maybe yes, she lived long time when she was older, live with a doctor, Egyptian man.

Was she very beautiful?

Yes, also no. She was long, strong body, her face strong but I think not like beautiful ladies. I think she did sing only one time for, not Arabic country, she sing in Paris; and so many people, too uh the tickets for that party, cost too much money, some problems because too many people. And she say, give all money for some I don't know poor people, sick people, what I want with money, I sing for music not for money. Yes, when I was young, young man in the military of Syria, yes we make two years of military work for Syria, I become so boring and uh nothing to do, sit on the border of Lebanon, there nothing, dry, stones, also some time that Golan we sit, sit, do nothing. Then every time they will play Umm Kulsum her songs, we feel we will die if they not play that - I learn to sing all words from one song uh longer of this one! Really, you will not believe, I same leader, have this (gestures to shoulders) and one day Umm Kulsum singing on that radio, I get some idea in my mind and begin tell the mens build house. Yes, that true; take stones to make small house like long time before, old people, build all stones and take some metal sheets for military to make uh roof; maybe nine meter square, one door, small window; uh not to where you can see it from military buildings, away of some distance, how I can say in uh below, under, of some hill. This my palace. I walk some times to get away form other mens, talk stupid things like donkeys, I sit or perhaps lying in my palace, like the king, sing words from Umm Kulsum, this like philosophy, from that poem who write all good strong words for her to sing.

Did she only sing in Arabic?

Yes, only Arabic. Really, she is so famous and I will say number one for all Arabs, maybe Fairouz that from Lebanon number two, but we can say Fairouz have softer voice, not to uh make you feel strong feelings same Umm Kulsum. I am sorry you cannot understand this singing! Too much to say and explain in English!
APPENDIX B7: Conversation recorded on 9 November 2006

N I will tell you now about my time in the prison.
R OK! Why did you go to prison?
N Oh ho, I talk of Syria, not America! That Third World Country! Because in the prison I meet, uh I'm sorry, met, very very good, nice man, he artist.
R That sounds interesting!
N Yes. When I young man, young architect, uh I did, I was one day on the building place, the uh, site, to look, to see if they building correct from the plan, didn't make mistakes. Suddenly I become, uh, I have feeling I want to drive that one, big machine, uh, to move the ground – I'm sorry, (uses electronic dictionary) yes, the bulldozer (laughs). Oh, I didn't have licence but I want to drive him. So I get up and drive that machine strong, the machine uh, walking a little fast but I like that. Then I make terrible, I didn't know what, uh, the machine she cut the uh, big uh, cables from under the ground that they bring electricity to the town, you understand.
R Goodness! What happened then?
N Every one in Syria afraid of police, of government, and will take care of problem not his, but from, uh, other person. The manager, that man uh, controlled of the site, call the police, to they come to see (laughs). To the problem from me, not from him. Police will not talk, they take me to the prison. You understand, prison in Syria bring good money for those dogs controlled of the uh, the law. If the family bring money, no problem to leave that prison; my family angry from police, they uh, want too much money, so I wait to my father get that enough money. I wait maybe five days. My father is farmer, he not have too much money every time of the year. Also my father angry from me, why you like boy have no mind?
R Did you go on trial?
N Excuse me, I don't know that word?
R Did you go to court, you know, law, judge?
N No, prison just to make money for them, not for (thinks) correct society.
R Were you alone in the prison cell?
N No, I sit with some mens, uh men, in the prison cell, but I didn't speak to them. Then suddenly police throw a man inside my prison cell. He, uh, I see, long hair and wearing – what you say, that warm from sheep, the soft – excuse me (uses electronic dictionary) How you say? Jersey?
R That's right.
N Jersey. And it have uh, the, many, uh holes. I like, uh I liked his face and asked him, what you did for police? He begin to explain. That he artist and walking one day in the street in Aleppo, uh foreign mens ask him where they will find nice hotel. He take, uh, yes, took them to nice hotel. They drink beer and ask him address to write letter, I don't know visit. Maybe some time, uh, months, after, police came to his room and take him. That foreign mens, men, they written to him a letter in French language from Belgica and police take it, to read it, but of course (laughs) they
understand nothing. Those foreign mens, uh men make problem, they write from philosophy and thinking, ideas, but uh in French. So that man is problem with foreign mens, to make problems for Syria government, and he must pay more money as, uh, as, then from me to leave prison cell, and he a poor man...

R How long were you in the prison together?

N I think, two days. We ask the police who uh, uh, controlled of us, that we wanted a cigarette. He give, but he refuse to give uh, what that, same lighter? From wood, to make small fire?

R Matches?

N Yes, didn't give matches, and laughing too much. But we happy to talk all time. I visit him in Aleppo many times, uh, long time after that prison; he was very good artist, to make uh pictures of land and water. I think he did leave Syria, I lose him.
APPENDIX B8: Conversation recorded on 21 December 2006

N  I will tell you something about uh, married, married Muslim man. That is a good story.
R  OK.
N  In Aleppo was a rich man, he very busy, rich, many uh business, hotels, yes, everybody know his name, uh very success. I mean successful, correct?
R  That’s right!
N  But he was very, very poor when he a small boy, his family live in Lattakia, that city on the sea, how you call it in English, sea from Lebanon, Greek, Italy ... 
R  The Mediterranean Sea?
N  Yes, I think that. The Medite - dite - ranean Sea. Only one time I went, uh, take my small sons to that Mediranian, sorry not correct, to that sea to swim and play in the water, but we not, uh, can not swim good! Too afraid! We try what we can but not uh like those who live, fisher, uh fishermans, swim like the fish, my small sons uh, cry with loud sound and I, OK, I didn’t cry because I am her, sorry their strong father (laughs) but of course inside I cry too much. Yes, that true, I am afraid of the sea! I am sorry, here I see my mind traveling. I will talk about that rich man.
R  OK, continue?
N  Yes. He was small boy and very poor; his grandfather gave to him a donkey, small donkey. This long time ago. Uh, that boy get up every day, morning, same time three o’ clock and go with his donkey to the sea, the, uh, where the boats come to bring her fish. He take uh took every day fish to put on the back of the donkey and uh walk to this small shops, that one, all shops to uh, we say he will deliver every time the fresh fish for the shops. Then that boy standing with small uh box long time every morning and men coming to work, sea, boats, shops, that they will buy from him cup of tea, hot from the small fire. Every day he make, made this programme, same, never uh changed, and made, keep all his money. He did not finish from school, later all his time for this uh business, this trade with the donkey and the fish. And also took all things, equipments, what they need for the boats to go, maybe food, I don’t know. That donkey will carry, carry, every time! Then he bought some piece of land outside that city, uh small section, and so he begin uh yes to become, to get more and more money, to buy, to sell, buildings, land. Also he went for uh to make some business with the Saudi, uh, family of that uh malik, uh ... king, to do some business with them, and make too much money. But every time he will come, he come back to his city Lattakia and later I consultant for some planning of apartments he build in Aleppo. But he dead, suddenly one day.
R  What happened?
N  Yes, God will decide everything! That man was on his boat. He have many boats but this one for him a special. It was big boat uh to take fish from the uh, sea, I mean the lake, that big lake in my country. He travel on the boat they say to feel happy as from his time when he a small boy and
work every day with uh that fish, that simple strong life with her donkey uh every uh dark morning. Maybe I don't know if that true, but yes, that man he was on the fish boat. Then happen a storm, very terrible, the boat uh fall off, fell on his side, turn his head, I want to say that boat go under the water. Some people found uh find the body of that rich man lying with her face in the sand, maybe he did swim, maybe that storm push his body uh to found uh on the sand.

R That's very sad.

N He was a good man, Muslim man, so not feel sad, he will go to his paradise, that same paradise you believe, but some things different for us, to have happy life uh for all time, no more worry this, plan that, finish that thing, gala! Rest, enjoy all things... Oh, then they put the body in the ground. That night all family and her many friends sit to cry for the man died, all ladies sit in one room, spirit from the men, then one night sud ...

R Excuse me, men what?

N Men spirit. Spirit?

R Um, no... I don't think...

N Not with the ladies, other room, no mix of...

R Perhaps... you mean separate? Not together?

N Separate, yes, oh I am sorry. Separate. Not together. The men separate room from the ladies. All crying and thanking God for all good things from, uh, that man's life. But oh, a lady come, came to the door of that house, and enter to the room of ladies. She tall and hold with her hands two children. She took her sheilah off her face and oh, she was very beautiful. She said hallo, I come to the um, I'm sorry, what is that word, to put the human died in the ground? To cry for him, all family together...

R Funeral?

N Thank you, yes correct, his funeral. I come to funeral of my husband. Funeral for that man finished but oh, oh, those ladies now cry very loud sound! This a beautiful Moroccan lady and her two children, and she have the papers of the uh married, longtime, and two children and uh come for to get of uh of that rich man what uh wife will get if her husband died. So, she came and for Islam, you understand that wife, uh second wife of that one man, she will get same uh first wife, same value of to that, uh, percentage sharia give for wife, and also for her children.

R Did the lady stay in Syria or did she go back to Morocco?

N No, she lived long time in Egypt, where that rich man traveled many times, her home in Cahira. She went back to Egypt but first make friends with the mother and father of that rich man, this also their grandchildren, children of their son, uh son died of course, and become to love and visit, I don't know if the two ladies became friends, I think no.

R An interesting story!

N Yes, that strange 'or you, with Muslim more than one wife; but we say better, not have wife and running like the fox in the secret road to have girlfriend, then he will maybe leave his wife and children and some money they uh will uh fight from that, uh business of fox ...
R  Maybe, OK ... let's agree to disagree!
N  How? Let's agree to disagree ... I like that! Agree to disagree. Good, I will remember.
APPENDIX B9: Conversation recorded on 16 January 2007

R Let’s talk about animals, about pets. Do you, or did you, ever keep pets in the house? A cat, a dog?

N Oh, that for us different from English people. I did have bird, a bird, I keep her in a, uh ... box, small box, same small prison, a ... I don’t know correct word here.

R Cage.

N Cage, small cage. But the Prophet Mohammed say for us animals *haram*, you understand, *haram* inside the home, to bring dirty and uh sick to people. Animals good for to help, work, that cat he eat the mouses, dog uh to hunt for food and, and, to ... protect her family, park in the night. I see in the films of English, English people will kiss that dog, cat, uh to friend that animal, sleep on the bed, that horrible. Why that.

R Tell me about the bird that you kept?

N Yes, that good reason for uh I hate, hate the cat! The male cat. Let me to explain. I have small beautiful bird, this many years before; I keep the bird, she blue of colour, in that small uh, small coge, that I put on balcony. My house old Arab house but I design good elevation, to make nice balcony and sit of time sun go down, sit uh relax and look what people doing, children playing. I sit with bird and drink perhaps some beer. But I leave that coge open, oh ho that male cat from my neighbour came to inside my house and I find died, the bird died, from that horrible cat. And he not eating that bird! Just we can say morderer, not mother to kill for food her babies, yes, morderer, that day I begin hate all cats.

R You should have closed the cage...

N Of course, but I see cat his natural of morderer. Same that animal, uh ... tiger, why I will keep tiger in my house.

R Sorry, I love cats!

N Oh, but I will tell you good story of dog. Many years before. This good. My father give, sorry gave to me piece of land, a good land with water, uh same small river. I farmer in the weekend, have tractor, uh, not animals farmer, I had trees, fruit, some vegetables. Melons, I sell the melons, some *tine, tine*, small fruit, green, hard uh ... that tree became full of uh all the beautiful white flowers in the spring, uh, I’m sorry. Also the date trees, and honey, sweet from that small animal. Also I have many problems from the society, my family, I get angry from the people and get away, I went every time to my farm and alone, to work, to find the nature, that good. There was a small house, old house, not good to live, on that farm. I sit there in the night, sleep, eat some food from fire. That time in my life I remember good and bad. Then came that dog, uh suddenly he came, I see him one day come slowly and hungry, sit afar of me, look, look at me long time. I say dog, what you want, also you have problems with other dogs? (laughs) That dog thin, long, he is uh was dirty and I think some sick of the dog. He did followed me to the house, and sit, sat at the door. He sat at the door, he look, he looked. I put for him water. I put for him some small meat
and he take it slowly. I sit in the night with the, uh, light, fire? Small light to burn. I say, dog, dog, come, sit here. He lie down to look, I say come, come, he get up and walk small uh, distance to me. I put food, that meat, for him. Then he stay, took that meat, eat, stay all the night. Then, every time I on the farm, that dog there uh at the house. Say hallo, hallo dog. He walked every time I work on the farm, busy of vegetables, water, trees, he follow and sit to look. Yes, I like that dog too much. One day he did run for a rabbit, small rabbit come to eat vegetables, but that rabbit she run too fast for that dog!

R  What did the dog eat during the week, when you were not there?

N  I think what he catch, no caught, caught maybe some small animals, find somewhere, I didn't know. Uh I did never see that dog fat. But always nice, polite, same he will say thank you for food, for water I give him, and sit all night, I read maybe long time of small light, he will lie to look, sleep ...

R  Inside the house?

N  Yes! Because that old house, not family, children, nice, clean and that dog same me, farmer, uh yes. Then not important haram, not haram. That dog my friend, we work same as together uh you can say two farmers.

R  Where is the dog now?

N  Oh, this memory will make me to cry sometimes. I come one day, weekend, travel with small pick-up and the dog did not come to say hallo, hallo my friend. No dog. What I will do? I will wait, and busy of farm. I make repairs, made repairs to some fence and then I see, under tree lying that dog. I think he sleeping but also I know not sleeping. I know he is died. I sit down, I say all life end same this, one day life and hello, hello, next day died, finish, goodbye, goodbye. Then I make hole in the ground and put that dog in the hole.

R  That's a touching story.

N  How? Touching, this mean, same touching I will touch table?

R  No, it means it makes you feel something, like sadness.

N  OK. Touching. That's a touching story.

R  Yes.
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that, who, whom, whose, what, when, where, why, how, whether

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who, whom, which, that, whose

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Time: when, whenever, as, while, till, until, after, before, since, ever since, as soon as, no sooner ... than, hardly ... when, scarcely ... when, as long as

Place: where, wherever, whence

Cause or Reason: because, as, since, for

Purpose: to, that, so that, in order that, lest

Result or Consequence: so + adjective + that, so + adverb + that, such + noun + that

Comparison: as ... as, so ... as, than

Manner: as, as if, as though

Contrast or Concession: though, although, as, even if, however, whatever

Condition: if, if ... not, unless, etc.

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