

***ANALYSIS OF ERRORS MADE BY
IRAQI FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS IN USING THE ENGLISH
CARDINAL NUMBERS***

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1- Introduction:

In acquiring a language, be it the first language (L1) of the learner, or a second one (L2), learners do frequently and unavoidably make grammatical, i.e. linguistic, mistakes of all sorts. Mistakes made in the context of second language learning (technically referred to as 'errors') have been observed to be of varying degrees of difficulty and problematicness. Some errors have been found less problematic than others; others have turned out to be impervious to correction and would persist in posing serious challenge to the learner up to a very late stage in his/her language learning progress. Yet, these errors have proved to be inevitable to the development of language learning and have come to be taken as a healthy sign of learnability: 'you can't learn without goofing' (Dulay and Burt, 1974:95). On the significance of studying and analyzing L2 learners 'errors' a lot has thus far been written: Corder (1967), Wilkins (1972), Richards (1974), Corder (1974), Dulay et. al. (1982), to mention just a few.

Now although, on the practical side, none of the linguistic categories of English (and, indeed, any other language) could escape being a vulnerable area to the error-making mechanism, it is quite noticeable that the area of English cardinal numbers (CN, hereafter) has been one of the least investigated with respect to this feature of language learning (i.e. error-making). This should be quite obvious from reviewing the whole host of sample examples of grammatical

errors supplied in Richards (op. cit) and Dulay et. al. (op cit), for example. There has been no mention of (or reference to) one single instance of error occurrence within this category therein. Neither could the present researcher come across a reference to such a possibility elsewhere in the literature. This work comes, then, as a first, preliminary attempt at exploring the possible incidence of errors in the use of the English CNs. Its aim is twofold: it seeks, first, to identify and classify the potential errors that the Iraqi first-year university students (as foreign language learners) would come up with, and, second, to attempt to spot the cause(s) that would make such errors materialize and eventually show up.

2- The Problem:

Despite its relative simplicity of structure and ease of presentation, compared with the other grammatical categories of the English language, the English CNs seem, still, to be an area of difficulty and error-making for some 'advanced' Iraqi learners. Various types of errors have been observed to be committed in the oral as well as the written production of these numbers.

3- Scope of the Study:

- 1) The study concerns itself with one type of numbers, namely, CNs. It excludes all together any reference to other types such as ordinal numbers vulgar fractions, decimal fractions, collective numbers,...etc.
- 2) It is, also, concerned with the production of the written forms of the English CNs, rather than with the perception of their oral realizations (or pronunciation) by the non-native Iraqi learners (except when such oral perception might have some bearing on the written realization of some numbers.
- 3) It is of vital importance to assert here that this work is exclusively designed to investigate which number sub-type(s), rather than which number tokens in particular, are liable most to be erroneously produced.

- 4) Where students' errors are ascribable to transfer from the learners' mother tongue, that is Arabic, the variety of Arabic which will be referred to for the purpose of explaining such errors is Modern Standard Arabic as it is the variety which "is officially used today in Arabic newspapers, radio, TV newscasts, official meetings, conferences, and formal education and may thus cause interference" (Khafaji and Na'ma, 1986:3).

4- Description of the Test and Research Procedure:

As an elicitation technique, a test in the form of a list of (34) different and varied numbers was given to a group of Iraqi learners of English; they were instructed to write them down in words on separate answer sheets. The testees were allowed sufficient time to finish up this task, and were kept apart from each other. To make the production of these numbers look as natural and authentic as possible, and as some sort of a distractor, the testees were made to believe that the purpose of the test was to examine the way these figures are spelt and punctuated in writing. Later, each answer sheet was carefully and duly gone through by the researcher. Finally, following the customary convention adopted in such kind of research work, and after having had the errors committed by the subjects identified and adequately taxonomized, a thorough error analysis was conducted to pinpoint and explain the source(s) that caused these errors to arise.

5- The Subjects:

The students who acted as subjects to the test were (30) first-year university students of English in the College of Arts, University of Basrah. They were seventeen male- and thirteen female-students. All subjects were randomly chosen, and they voluntarily agreed to participate in the test. All reported to have spent between eight to eleven years learning English as a foreign language at the pre-university stages.

Table One
Results of the Test & Taxonomy of Errors

NUMBERS	I '-teen↔-ty' Interchange	II Reversal of Number	III 'and' Omission	IV '-s' Addition	V 'and' Addition
4					
7					
9					
13	7				
14	6				
16	3				
18	3				
20					
28		3			
36					
41	2				
50					
73		2			
90					
96	2	1			
118	2		18		
134	1	2	22		
146	1	3	21		
158	1	3	21		
163	1	2	20		
218	4	1	21	1	
357		3	19	2	
637		2	22	2	
783		2	15	1	
924		3	19	1	
1,142	1	1	19		10
1,228		4	19	3	8
2,416	6	1	18	13	9
3,643		2	18	11	5
6,259		1	19	12	11
13,459	1	1	16	11	8
36,314	2	1	17	12	8
1,418,727	5	4	27	12	17
3,094,589		5	26	18	17
TOTAL	48	47	377	99	93

6- Results of the Test:

As is revealed by Table One above, a total of (664) erroneous forms were scored out of (1020) realizations (of 34 numbers by 30 students). These were found to be assignable to five distinct error types. The gravity of these errors, it must be promptly stated, has been established according to the frequency of the error occurrence (FO, henceforth), rather than "to notions of degree of communicative difficulty or globality ..." (Palmer, 1980:94, and see also Wilkins, op cit:199). Accordingly, it is error type III which turned out to be the gravest, with a total of (377) error occurrences. In comparison, error types I and II seemed much less frequent or problematic for the subjects. Types IV and V, on the other hand, appeared rather moderate with respect to the FO criterion and stood somewhere between these two ends.

7- Interpretation of Errors:

7.1 Introduction:

Owing to the fact that the mental processes and mechanisms involved in the process of language learning are still, to a very large extent, beyond direct observation and scrutiny, all possible interpretations that might be thought of as appropriate to account for the emergence of errors in foreign (or second) language learning are still speculative (see in this connection Corder, 1974:130). To make things even more complicated, there has always been a growing recognition of the impact and involvement of other numerous factors (1) in facilitating or impeding the modus operandi of the language learning process. Gathered together, such factors would inevitably add to the difficulties of setting up some solid principles and bases on which error explanation could be carried out effectively. All of this should ultimately render the interpretation of the source(s) of errors "notorious for being complicated, hazardous and tentative" (Khafaji and Na'ma, op cit:6). Yet, when duly and systematically carried out, these interpretations will help a great deal in revealing some insights and interesting aspects of the language learning process, as well as making our teaching strategies "become more sensitive to the abilities brought to the task by the learner" (Brumfit, 1980:114).

The procedure to be followed in conducting the analysis and interpretation of the errors will run as follows: wherever necessary, a descriptive statement of the grammatical rule being violated or deviated from is given first; this is then followed by an extensive discussion of the nature of the error and the cause(s) that brought it about.

7.2 Error Type I: "-teen↔-ty" Interchange

Examples:		<u>FO</u>
		48
13	thirty	
41	fourteen one	
218	two hundred eighty (2)	

The error here is so apparent that it needs no comment or further description. What is of more concern to us is to try to find out the reason(s) that have conduced to its emergence. There might be, to begin with, more than one source or originator that collaborated to cause this type of error to materialize and arise. It is highly likely that the occurrence of such an error is an outcome of some earlier inadequate (and, perhaps, even faulty) teaching techniques and inefficient target language models to which these Iraqi learners were exposed at the pre-university stages. (This is to say it might be an instance of what has come to be known as 'teaching-induced' errors (Corder, op cit:131)). To verify this claim, some elaboration is quite essential. It has been observed that the distinction between the –teen numbers and the –ty ones---especially in speech---may not be so easily detected even by native speakers. Allsop remarks that "the difference in pronunciation between the –teen numbers and the –ty numbers is small, and English people often mishear them"(Allsop, 1983:84, and see also Palmer and Blandford, 1969:88). To make them distinguishable, most grammarians recommend that the –teen suffix should be heavily stressed, while the –ty suffix must be left unstressed (Allsop, op cit:84, and Praninskas, 1975:61). Stress, then, seems to be a vital element in helping to distinguish between these two sub-types of CNs. The question now is: to what extent have the Iraqi primary-

and intermediate-school teachers been successful in mastering the patterns and intricacies of the English stress system, and how competent are they to employ it efficiently and effectively?

There is much reason to believe that the majority of these teachers know almost nothing of how to manipulate the intricate patterns and subtleties of the highly complex system of stress. This should not be at all surprising if we only know that "the majority of the [primary-school] teachers do not have any specialization in English in general and in phonetics in particular" (Karim, 1987:1-2). Stress in particular has, moreover, been demonstrated to be one of the thorniest areas of learning for the Iraqi learners, no matter whether they are pupils or teachers (3)(see in this respect Aziz (1980) and al-Sulaiman (1986)). Such unqualified and incompetent teachers should, then, be expected to unconsciously and unintentionally fail to bring out the distinction in speech between the –teen numbers and the –ty ones, and in so doing they would render these two sub-types of number quite confusable for the learner. And this, along with the fact that stress is intrinsically not easy to be handled perceptually---especially for the non-native learner of English, is what has eventually made these Iraqi learners find it difficult to discern the distinction between these numbers, and persist in producing them interchangeably, hence erroneously.

Another possible explanation for the occurrence of this error, and one which may seem related to the first, is that it could be a result of insufficient practice and/or lack of concentration on the part of the learners. This could best be verified through looking into the background of number learning/teaching in the syllabus.

It is in the first three books of The New English Course for Iraq (NECI, hereafter) series that the Iraqi learners are first introduced to the English CNs. In Book One, which introduces the numbers from 1-60 only (the numbers 1-20 are given both as figures and in words, as in:

one	two	three	four ...	ten
1	2	3	4	10,

whereas the numbers 21-60 are presented only as figures) are given most of the practice exercises and drills allocated to this grammatical

category in the syllabus. Nevertheless, not only have these exercises and drills been for the most part mechanical and sometimes even tedious, they are rather insufficient and distracting. To illustrate this last point, let us consider two samples of these exercises. Exercise 14.4, which is an oral practice exercise, runs as follows:

- | | | |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1) one book | one chair | one watch |
| 2) two books | two chairs | two watches |
| 3) three books | three | |
| 4) four books | | |

.
. .
.

10. ten books

It is quite obvious that this is much more an exercise on the different realizations of the plural morpheme {S} in English than on practicing the use of numbers as such; besides, it is quite dull and mechanical in nature.

The other exercise to be considered here is 14.6 which runs as follows:

- 1- There is one book in the classroom.
- 2- There are two books in the classroom.
- 3- There are three books in the classroom.

.
. .
.

10. There are ten books in the classroom.

This exercise iterates the numbers that are practiced in Exercise 14.4 and adds almost nothing except the distinction between the use of 'there is' and 'there are' in relation to singular/plural nouns. It is another of the dull, mechanical and time-consuming tasks and assignments which are imposed on the learner, and which cover the small numbers for the most part. This same observation holds true for the other oral and written exercises on numbers elsewhere in the other two Books.

Book Two resumes the account of the English CNs with a review exercise of the first 60 numbers of Book One. It, then, introduces the

numbers from 60-1000 (only as figures). The space and time allowed here for practicing these numbers is much less than it was in Book One; still, the exercises here are similarly structured and distributed to those of Book One. Book Three, on the other hand, gives the multiples of (100), (1000), (10,000) and (1,000,000) only---again only as figures. Surprisingly, it allows space for no more than one single written exercise on these numbers. With this single exercise the English CNs account is brought to an end, and the following books of the NECI series make no further reference to the CNs any more.

With these points borne in mind, we may conclude that the English CNs have not been sufficiently and effectively practiced at the pre-university stages. This, alongside of other determining factors such as the crowdedness of classes, the learners' motives in learning the foreign language, the artificiality of the exposure to the foreign language, among others (see in this connection Dulay et. al (op cit), especially chapters 2, 3 and 4) could, then, be what made these learners gain a rather shaky command over the use of the English CNs in general, and part of it is the confusion between the –teen and the –ty numbers. This point can further be confirmed by the observation that numbers per se seem to be one of the least used or recurring items in the spoken as well as the written forms of English---which is to say, in other words, that they have much less chance to be frequently practiced and, eventually, engraved in the mind of the learner than other grammatical categories.

7.3 Error Type II: Reversal of Number

Examples:		<u>FO</u>
28	eighty-two	47
134	one hundred forty-three	
6,259	six thousand and two hundred and ninety-five	

It is important to note, right from the beginning, that this error type is exclusively associated with two-digital numbers from 21-99 (excluding the multiples of ten, of course). This is always the case whether the number stands alone, or as a component of another, larger number, as is illustrated by the examples above.

This error type can readily and exclusively be attributed to interference from the learners' mother tongue, i.e. Arabic. That is to say it is an instance of what has come to be called 'interlingual' (or transfer) errors. Such errors "refer to L2 errors that reflect native language structure, regardless of the internal processes or external conditions that spawned them" (Ibid:171). Now, by way of demonstrating that this error has actually been brought about by L1 interference, it is essential to give a short note on the Arabic numerical system.

The Arabic CNs fall into the following categories:

- 1- 'āhād (one-digit numbers) i.e. 1-9
- 2- ʔasharāt (two-digit numbers) i.e. 10-99
- 3- mi'āt (three-digit numbers) i.e. 100-999
- 4- ālāf (four-six-digit numbers) i.e. 1,000-999,999
- 5- malāyeen (seven-nine -digit numbers) i.e. 1,000,000-999,999,999

(The use of numbers larger than those of 5. above is quite compatible to the practice elsewhere in the world).

The second category, i.e. ʔasharāt, can further be categorized, on the basis of the morphological structure of its members, into the following sub-sets:

- 2.i the multiples of ten, i.e. 10, 20, 30,...90
- 2.ii the numbers: 11, 12, 13,...19
- 2.iii the numbers: 21, 22, 37, ...99

Now, while sub-sets 2.i and 2.ii are similarly handled (i.e. realized both in speech and in writing) by the two languages in contact and, hence, are anticipated to cause no trouble for the Arab learners in general, sub-set 2.iii is an area of divergence between the two languages and, consequently, a source of learning difficulty and error-making. Interestingly, the two languages seem, on the surface, to be quite compatible in so far as the way these numbers are represented as figures is concerned, but they drastically differ in realizing them in speech and in writing. A two-digit number of sub-set 2.iii is produced in Arabic according to the pattern: the smaller (i.e. 'āhād) figure comes first then comes the larger (i.e. ʔashrāt) one. Thus, numbers such as 28, 96, 134, for example, are pronounced/written as:

28	thamāniya wa ?ishr□n	(literally: eight and twenty)
96	sitta wa tis?□n	(lit: six and ninety)
134	mi'a wa 'arba?a wa thalān	(lit: hundred and four and thirty)

Unlike Arabic, English reads/writes such numbers in the order by which they are strung as figures, that is, they are patterned as follows: the larger figure first followed by the smaller one, as in:

28	twenty-eight
96	ninety-six
134	one hundred and thirty-four

This dissimilarity between the two languages with respect to the realization of sub-set 2.iii numbers must, then, account for the incidence of this type of error. The Iraqi learners seem to transfer the native 'habit' of producing these numbers in a reverse order while performing linguistically in the foreign language, which results in their coming up with faulty realizations of these numbers. What is most probable to take place in this context is that in the production of these numbers, it is the second, smaller figure that first jumps into the mind (or on the tongue) of the Iraqi learner, as this is always the case when performing in his native language. It is worth noting, in passing, that no such errors have ever been observed to occur in the production of the first two sub-sets of numbers. This is largely due to the fact that the two languages in contact exhibit no differences whatsoever as to the manner in which these numbers are realized orally or in writing. This last point seems to substantiate one of the earliest and most fundamental assumptions which were held and maintained by the early contrastivists, namely, that the L2 elements "that are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult" (Lado, 1957:2).

To sum up the foregoing argument, there is a great deal of reason to think that this type of error must have originated from negative transfer from L1 into L2. This is most likely to be the case since the two languages involved appeared to reflect substantial differences with regard to the oral as well as the written representations of numbers of sub-set 2.iii.

7.4 Error Type III: 'and' Omission

Examples:		<u>FO</u>
158	one hundred fifty eight	377
1,142	one thousand and one hundred forty two	
13,459	thirteen thousand and four hundred fifty nine	

The rules of English grammar entail the use of 'and' "after hundred, thousand, million, if these numbers are followed by one of the first 99 numbers" (Miller, 1957:69, and Thomson and Martinet, 1969:251). This has always to be the case whether the number is produced orally or as a written form. This error has turned out to be the gravest---in the sense of the most frequently committed---among the other error types identified in this work. What is most surprising about it is that the native language of the learners, Arabic, does in fact require the existence of 'and' in this same position, among others, as well. Thus, numbers such as 158 and 1,142, for instance, are rendered in Arabic as:

158 mi'a wa thamāniya wa khams□n
 (lit: hundred and eight and fifty)

1,142 'alf wa mi'a wa 'ithnān wa 'arba?□n
 (lit: thousand and hundred and two and forty)

This should therefore rule out any possibility of mother tongue interference. What, then, makes these learners drop the word 'and' from the written/oral realizations of the numbers that require it?

One of the most probable interpretations for the emergence of this error rests on the assumption that some interference from the target language itself might underlie the occurrence of this error. It is, to put it in another way, an instance of what is technically referred to as 'analogical' errors (Corder, op cit:130) or intralingual errors (Richards and Sampson, 1974:6). Such type of errors may originate from any one (or an aggregate) of the following sources: 1) overgeneralization, 2) ignorance of rule restriction, 3) incomplete application of rules, 4) false concepts hypothesized, among others (Richards, op cit:181, and Hussein, 1984:121). With respect to the error under consideration, it might well be ascribed to a case of over-(or faulty) generalization. By overgeneralization is meant here "the inappropriate use of the already

acquired strategies in some situation through the learner's recognition of superficial similarities. The learner may generalize a specific rule and apply it rather indiscriminately to many irrelevant cases because of its heavy pressure"(Ibid:121). The learners who committed this error might have worked it out on the false analogy of the manner in which numbers are employed in giving dates and/or telling time. For, it is as early as the second year of their learning English that the Iraqi learners are introduced to one of the modes of giving a date. (This is concomitant with the introduction of the numbers 60-1000 in Book Two of the NECI). This mode, which has turned out the only technique of giving dates presented to the learner in the whole series, is the following:

1958 nineteen fifty-eight
1959 nineteen fifty-nine
1960 nineteen sixty,...etc. (see the NECI, Book Two, pp. 121-3).

It is very easy for the learner to note that no 'and's are required in the oral/written representations of the above date-numbers. This might have given the learners the impression that the use of 'and' is not quite essential elsewhere as well. That is to say, they may build on the unnecessary presence of the word 'and' in the realization of these numerical constructions (i.e. the dates) and come to treat numbers---especially of the same structure---in exactly the same way, which is to say that they overgeneralize the application of the rule for date-telling to include numbers as such. This could, then, be one of the most probable sources for the occurrence of this error type.

By the same token, telling time might also be taken as another contributing factor in the emergence of this error. For, despite the fact that the Iraqi learners are given only one of the modes of telling time in English in the whole NECI series, which is the following:

It's nine o'clock.
It's five past nine.

It's twenty past seven,...etc. (NECI, Book One, pp.141-4 & 159), it is quite possible that these learners could have had the chance of learning the other modes from other sources. It is likely that they could have picked the following mode of telling time---the one which has become the most widely used nowadays:

- 2:15 It's two fifteen.
7:45 It's seven forty-five.
11:35 It's eleven thirty-five.

from the radio, TV, western serials and films, other more advanced learners of English, and the like. Here, again, the learner would notice the non-use of the connective 'and' in the written as well as the oral production of these numerical constructions. This could, in turn, lead them up to uphold the earlier assumption of the insignificance of the presence of 'and' in the production of such numbers.

The other plausible interpretation which can be postulated to account for the incidence of this particular error has to do with its surface characteristics as an omission error (4). That is, the learners may look upon the word 'and' as a grammatical morpheme (vs content word), and as such it is liable to be left out. For it has been observed that the "language learners omit grammatical morphemes much more frequently than content words"(Dulay et. al, op cit:155). "And' may have, thus, been deemed one of "those little words that play a minor role in conveying the meaning of a sentence"(Ibid:155). And this should account for the too many occurrences of 'and' omission in the production of those numbers that entail its presence.

7.5 Error Type IV: "-s" Addition

Examples:

		<u>FO</u>
637	six hundreds thirty seven	99
36,314	thirty six thousands and three hundreds and fourteen	
3,094,589	three millions and ninety four thousands and five hundreds eighty-nine	

In English, "the words hundred, thousand, and million, when used as a definite number, are never made plural" (Thomson and Martinet, op cit:252). But when used as common nouns, these words can be formally marked for plurality in exactly the same way as any other countable noun, e.g.:

- I lost two hundreds of my shares yesterday.
- Many thousands of the population have become homeless.

Now, if one is to look into the causes that have led these learners to come up with such an error, one would have to relate them to more than one single source or originator. There might have been at least two major factors that could have instigated the incidence of this error. Of these two factors interference from L2 itself in the form of an overgeneralization case may, indeed, be the most probable. The learners have already learnt that the words 'hundred', 'thousand', and 'million' are all countable nouns. Accordingly, they should be expected to make the sweeping judgement (or generalization) that such words must be pluralized, as is the case with the other countable nouns, when preceded by any numerical modifier over one. Hence, inasmuch as countable common nouns such as 'report' and 'page', for instance, have to be marked for plurality by being suffixed with the plural morpheme, as in:

- We have received only three reports up to now.
- She couldn't type more than twenty pages before she left.

the three words 'hundred', 'thousand', 'million' should, by the same token, be similarly treated. What happens here is that the learners tend to overgeneralize the application of the rule of pluralization to situations where it is inapplicable according to the rules of grammar. This is, it should be pointed out, an instance of the phenomenon referred to in the literature as 'hypercorrection' by which "a form is produced correctly at first but that its use is subsequently influenced by other learning, so that it is incorporated into a rule which does not apply to it" (Wilkins, op cit:201). Interestingly, none of the testees had committed the utterly intolerable mistake of having the words 'hundred'...etc. tagged with as '-s' ending when they were premodified by the word 'one'. They only seem to have fallen into the trap of pluralizing these words under the spell of the numerical premodifiers, which have always to be over 'one'.

Another possible interpretation for the emergence of this type of error is that it could be a result of interference from L1 of the learners. That is to say, it could be an interlingual error. To demonstrate that it is possibly so, a systematic comparison between the two languages involved has to be adequately and rigorously drawn. A comparison

such as this would reveal a considerable discrepancy between the two languages concerned with respect to the realization of numbers containing the words 'hundred', 'thousand' and 'million'. Thus, whereas English does not allow for these words to be formally marked for plurality (when denoting a definite number), in Arabic the three translation equivalent words to these can be tagged with the dual marker 'ān/ayn' (5) as in: mi'a - mi'atān/ayn (lit: two hundreds), 'alf – 'alfān/ayn (lit: two thousands), and milyoun – milyounān/ayn (lit: two millions). On the other hand, only the translation equivalents to 'thousand' and 'million' must bear the plural marker when they are premodified with any one of the numbers 3-10 (6), e.g.:

thalāthat 'ālāf (lit: three millions) sittat malāyeen (lit: six millions)

It is quite probable, then, that the Iraqi learners would transfer this native technique of pluralizing such words into their performance in the foreign language. It is, apparently, more logical ---according to these learners---to have these words pluralized, following the practice in their native language and/or taking into account the fact that these words are countable nouns and, hence, capable of being suffixed with the plural ending.

The two interpretations postulated, to end up, seem almost equally plausible and probable, and either or both of them can be taken as the originator of this error type.

7.6 Error Type V: 'And' Addition

Examples:

6,259	six thousands and two hundred and fifty nine	<u>FO</u> 93
1,418,727	one million and four hundred and eighteen thousand and seven hundred and twenty seven	

As mentioned earlier, English only permits the use of 'and' with the numbers 'hundred', 'thousand' and 'million' if these are followed by one of the first 99 numbers; the word 'and' should, furthermore, be placed before the last item in the number (Thomson and Martinet, op cit:251). Thus, numbers such as the ones below must include only one 'and' in each:

1,006	one thousand and six
3,460	three thousand, four hundred and sixty
2,009,109	two million, nine thousand, one hundred and nine

What the Iraqi learners tend to do is to include too many 'and's elsewhere (7) within numbers that are of four- and above digits specifically, which results in producing erroneous forms of these numbers. This seems to be brought about by interference from the learners' mother tongue (which is to say that this error is also interlingual in nature). That it is so can best be proven through supplying the Arabic version of the readings of the numbers above:

1,006	'alf wa sitta (lit: (a) thousand and six)
3,460	thalāthat 'ālāf wa 'arba? mi'a wa sitt□n (lit: three thousands and four hundred and sixty
2,009,109	milyounān <u>wa</u> tis?at 'ālāf wa mi'a wa tis?a (lit: two millions and nine thousands and hundred and nine)

Thus, unlike English, Arabic does entail the presence of an 'and' after each one of the words 'hundred', 'thousand' and 'million'. This aspect of divergence between the two languages must be the source of this particular problem which the Iraqi learners encounter in using the English CNs. No other possible source or factor could be held responsible for initiating or causing this type of errors to arise.

8- Conclusions, General Remarks and Suggestions:

Following are some of the major conclusions that can be drawn from this study alongside some general remarks and suggestions that might be of interest to people working or involved in language learning and language teaching:

- 1) The English CNs have turned out to be no less problematic, challenging and error-provoking than any of the other grammatical categories of English. It has become evident that more than one aspect of the CNs patterns and use could be a potential source for inducing errors.
- 2) Of the errors committed within this kind of numbers, only a few can be attributed to L1 interference. The majority are ascribable to some other factors---environmental, psychological

or pedagogical. This seems quite compatible with results arrived at by recent research projects. It is further confirmed by the results of the test which was conducted for the purpose of this study, where it turned out that the gravest of the errors committed were those stemming from sources other than L1 interference.

- 3) As was indicated in the discussion on the interpretation of error type I, part of the problem of error-making in the area of CNs can be ascribed to the inadequacy of the teaching strategies and the ineffectiveness of the teaching material introduced to the learners throughout the pre-university stages. Hence, it is highly recommended that instead of giving the CNs account all in one go within the first three years of English learning, and instead of presenting the material in an artificial, mechanical and all too often boring manner, the CNs stuff should be diffused within the eight-year English curriculum. In addition, to make the practice exercises and drills more effective and fruitful, they have to be presented in real communication, natural situations and authentic language.
- 4) Since part of the problem with the use of the English CNs has to do with some of the suprasegmental features of English, it should perhaps be quite beneficial and essential for Iraqi school-teachers to, from time to time, make up for their deficiency in this aspect of the English language by taking refreshing specialized courses on phonetics and phonology.
- 5) Course designers, language teachers, material developers and the like are expected to make use of the findings of this study. They should be made aware of the necessity of allocating much more space and time to the CNs in the curriculum and the classroom activities.

Notes:

- 1) For an extensive discussion and presentation of such factors, see Dulay et. al. (op cit), especially chapters 2,3 and 4.
- 2) The examples given throughout are all actual realizations of errors as made by the testees in their answer sheets.

- 3) In a study on 'sound discrimination' conducted by Najat al-Jobouri (1981) and reported in Karim, op. cit:10, it was demonstrated experimentally that "...the teachers' responses In the area of consonants and vowels were above average whereas in the area of consonant clusters and stress were below it".
- 4) Such an error is characterized "by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance" (Dulay et. al., op cit:154).
- 5) b(ān) is used when the noun is in the nominative case, whereas (ayn) is attached to the noun when it is in the accusative/objective case.
- 6) With other numbers premodifying these words the singular form of the word is used, e.g.:
'ahada?ashara 'alf (lit: eleven thousand)
Khamsa wa ?ishr□n milyoun (lit: five and twenty million)
- 7) In Arabic, as a matter of fact, even a two-digit number of sub-set 2.III requires the use of 'and' between the two digits, as in:
21 wā□id wa ?ishr□n (lit: one and twenty)
37 sab?a wa thalāth□n (lit: seven and thirty).

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