CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 CA and EA

Structural linguistics and empirical descriptive studies in the first half of the 20th century were accompanied by an almost equal emphasis on CA. The aim of CA studies is to systematically compare the native language (L1) of a specific group of learners and the target language or (L2) so as to find out about the similarities and differences between the two languages. CA proponents such as Fries (1945) and Lado (1957), among others, believe that similarities between L1 and L2 can facilitate L2 learning while differences between the two languages can hinder L2 learning. Since CA is pedagogically oriented, it is argued that the differences between L1 and L2 should be given more attention by foreign language teachers and materials designers so as to facilitate L2 learning. In other words, dissimilarities between the two languages involved need to be emphasized and L2 learners need to be given more practice on those differences so as to get more exposure to L2 structures and to simultaneously reduce L1 interference. In a word, CA is mainly concerned with isolating those language items that are considered difficult and need to be learned and those considered easy and need not necessarily be taught. Lado (1957), in his influential book Linguistics Across Cultures, points out:

Since even languages as closely related as German and English differ significantly in the form, meaning, and distribution of their grammatical structures, and since the learner tends to transfer the habits of his native language structure to the foreign language, we have here the major source of difficulty or ease in learning the structure of a foreign language. Those structures that are similar will be easy to learn because they will be transferred and may function satisfactorily in the foreign language. Those structures that are different will be difficult because
when transferred they will not function satisfactorily in the foreign language and will therefore have to be changed. (Lado, 1957, p.59)

According to Gass and Selinker (1994, p.60), the pedagogical materials that resulted from contrastive analyses were based on the following assumptions:

1) Contrastive analysis is based on a theory of language that claims that language is habit and that language learning involves the establishment of a new set of habits.
2) The major source of error in the production and/or reception of a second language is the native language.
3) One can account for errors by considering differences between the L1 and the L2.
4) A corollary to #3 is that the greater the differences, the more errors that will occur.
5) What one has to do in learning a second language is learn the differences. Similarities can be safely ignored as no new learning is involved. In other words, what is dissimilar between two languages is what must be learned.
6) Difficulty and ease in learning are determined respectively by differences and similarities between the two languages in contrast.

There were two positions that developed with regard to the CAH. These were known as the strong versus the weak view or the predictive versus the explanatory view. The strong view claims that one can make predictions about learning and about the success of language teaching materials based on a comparison between two languages. The weak version, on the other hand, starts with an analysis of learners' recurring errors and attempts to account for those errors on the basis of NL-TL differences. The weak version gained credence due to the failure of predictive contrastive analysis (Nickel and Wagner, 1968; Burn, 1974; Patnaik, 1976; Bell, 1981; Gass and Selinker, 1994). Regarding the relevance of contrastive analysis to L2 learning and teaching it is pointed out
that CA findings have facilitated the job of L2 teachers despite the drawbacks of CAH to precisely predict the errors that L2 learners make.

2.1.1 Error Analysis

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. Unlike contrastive analysis, the comparison made is between the errors the learner makes in producing the TL and the TL form itself. Corder's (1974) article, *The Significance of learners' errors*, helped view errors not as a sin that needs to be eradicated but as an indication of an underlying rule-governed system. Errors, in other words, are important in and of themselves. They are to be viewed as indications of a learner's attempt to figure out how the target language system works. Corder points out that there are three stages in learning that L2 learners go through: (a) the 'pre-systematic' stage (b) the 'systematic' stage and finally (c) the 'post-systematic' stage.

Corder makes a clear distinction between 'mistakes', 'lapses', and 'errors'. It is argued that native speakers can sometimes produce ill-formed utterances which are usually readily correctable by the speaker. Besides, native speakers' slips of the tongue and 'lapses' can increase under conditions of 'stress', 'indecision', and 'fatigue'. So mistakes of performance should therefore be distinguished from those errors arising from an imperfect competence in the target language. Within the framework of EA, there are two main types of errors: inter-lingual and intra-lingual errors. Interlingual errors are attributable to the learners' NL and intralingual errors, on the other hand, are attributed to the peculiar nature of the target language or L2.

There are three stages in error analysis: recognition, description and explanation. Gass and Selinker (1994, pp.67-68) point out that there are a number of steps to be taken in conducting an error analysis.

1) Data need to be collected
2) Identify errors
3) Classify errors
4) Quantify errors
5) Analysis of source
6) Remediation

It should be pointed out that EA is also meant to help create pedagogical materials that can help tackle the linguistic problems facing L2 learners. In fact EA studies are meant to make language teachers and materials designers more aware of the problems facing second/foreign language learners so as to create materials that can help eradicate learners' errors and to facilitate learning. EA, however, was criticized for its total reliance on errors in the absence of other information. In other words, EA needs for instance to focus on errors and non-errors so as to be able to see the entire picture not just a small part of it (Gass and Selinker, 1994).

As indicated above the failure of CA studies to make precise predictions about the nature of the errors L2 learners make has given credence to EA. The emergence of EA did create a new field of study for applied linguists and language teachers to study L2 learners' errors and to look into the strategies they adopt when learning a second or a foreign language. As a consequence a number of studies have been conducted on L2 learners from various language backgrounds so as to find out about the sort of errors they produce. Though it is well documented that almost a third of the errors made by L2 learners is attributed to the mother tongue interference, there are other errors that are attributed to other factors such as developmental errors and errors that are due to the teaching materials and methods used in teaching second/foreign languages. Richards (1974), for instance, did a study in which he looked into the intralingual errors made by learners of English from different language groups such as Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagalog, Maori, Maltese, and the major Indian and West African languages. The following examples, according to him, can represent the kind of errors these learners produced.
• Did he comed?
• What you are doing?
• He coming from Sudan.
• Make him to do it.
• I can to speak French.

Richards indicates that “...interlingual and developmental errors reflect the learner’s competence at a particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition” (1974, p.173). He asserts that intralingual errors are committed by EFL/ESL learners due to “faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply” (p.174). He explains that the occurrence of such errors is motivated by the learners’ attempts to build up certain hypotheses about the English language on the basis of the limited input they are exposed to in the classrooms or in textbooks.

Another study is conducted by Ghadessy (1980) on 221 Iranian 10th graders. He obtained his data through a test which included three types of errors-phrase-structure, transformational and morphological. Each question included the correct answer, the error to be analyzed and two other distracters. The results show that the given percentage for developmental error is higher than the one for the correct answer. The results also indicate that most of the developmental errors that constitute a high percentage are related to the transformational levels. He attributes these developmental errors to the same factors given by Richards above. Ghadessy concludes that though the patterns of the native language influence to a certain degree the acquisition of L2, there are also other developmental types of errors that are quite similar to those made by a child learning his or her native language.
2.1.2 Contrastive Rhetoric and writing skills of Arab learners writing in English

Contrastive Rhetoric, as a new field of inquiry, was first introduced by Robert Kaplan in the year 1966. Though his 1966 study of 600 L2 student essays was exploratory, more intuitive than scientific, the importance of this pioneering work lies in the fact that it laid the foundation for contrastive rhetoric as a new field of study. The analysis of these 600 essays revealed that different cultures employ different rhetorical devices in organizing their written discourse. Kaplan asserts that “rhetoric, the method of organizing syntactic units into larger patterns, is as much a culturally coded phenomenon as the syntactic units themselves are” (1967, p.15). Contrastive rhetoric studies, for instance, have shown that English speakers think in a straight line while Asians think in circles and others in zigzags.

In addition, the work of Kaplan and others served the purpose of acquainting teachers as well as students with knowledge about how links between culture and writing are reflected in written products. It is vital to say here that the insights provided by the contrastive studies were wholeheartedly embraced by many ESL/EFL teachers. Contrastive rhetoric studies have been useful in drawing both teachers’ and students’ attention to issues regarding how discourse is organized differently in different cultures. Recently, Raimes (1991) and Leki (1991) have pointed out that contrastive rhetoric studies have been successful in creating real classroom applications that can be capitalized on in teaching L2 composition. However, as advocates of the process approach, Raimes and Leki argue that Kaplan’s diagrams of rhetorical patterns of written discourse readily place contrastive rhetoric into the current traditional approach to teaching ESL writing. They go on to say that contrastive rhetoric research examines the product only and pays no attention to the processes L2 writers go through in producing a text.
In his article *Contrastive Rhetoric and the Teaching of L2 Composition*, Kaplan (1967) discussed some of the characteristic features of Arabic rhetoric and how Arabic rhetoric seems to influence the way Arabic-speaking learners write in English. The entire article is devoted to analyzing an essay written by an Arab ESL student at a US university. Kaplan found that the text produced by this particular learner contained not only grammatical and mechanical errors but also problems stemming from the unique nature of the Arabic rhetorical system. Influenced by the rhetorical system of his own native language, this learner’s writing is characterized by his overuse of parallelism in preference to subordination. Stylistically, Arabic recommends parallelism but not subordination as is the case in English. It is clearly stated by Kaplan that the influence of Arabic rhetoric makes it difficult for these EFL writers to meet the expectations of their readers. In other words, the way discourse is organized in Arabic seems to influence, to some degree, the way Arab learners of English go about creating discourse in English.

In an attempt to find out about differences between Arabic and English at the rhetorical level of text organization, Mohammed and Omer (1999) compared two Arabic stories and their English translations and two Arabic and two English stories with reference to sentence organization, coordination and subordination. The findings of this study show that the Arabic sentence is longer than the English sentence. On average, the Arabic sentence contains more clauses than the English sentence. Moreover, Arabic and the English texts differ in sentential punctuation. Arabic, unlike English, often uses double or triple dots to signal the end of a sentence. Arabic often uses commas in positions where English would use full stops. It was also found that coordination is more common in Arabic, while subordination is more frequent in English than in Arabic. Mohammed and Omer assert that “the extensive use of coordination in Arabic suggests that ideas in written Arabic are organized in a ‘horizontal’ or ‘sequential’ fashion, both at the clause and sentence levels. Propositions are presented...through the process of addition (a+b+c)”
(1999, p.301). They, on the other hand, point out that "the frequent use of subordination in English texts suggests that English adopts a 'vertical' or 'hierarchical' mode of propositional development" (Mohammed and Omer, 1999, p.301).

Contrastive rhetoric studies have stressed the fact that L1 writing skills and strategies are transferred into L2 writing. This fact is well substantiated by the work of Kaplan and others who continued to do contrastive rhetoric studies following Kaplan's approach. For example, Jones and Tetroe (cited in Leki, 1991) concluded from a study of Spanish-speaking writers writing in English and Spanish that transfer from L1 to L2 writing does occur. On the other hand, by turning their back on contrastive rhetoric, process-oriented researchers argue that L2 writing problems are those of any developing writer. They point out that students come to L2 writing without any previously learned discourse schemata. In addition, it is implied that L1 writing skills and strategies are not transferable into L2 writing situations. Mohan and Lo (1985), for instance, argue that ESL learners encounter organizational problems in academic writing, and these problems are often ascribed to interference from the first language. However, recent research, according to them, suggests that such problems can be attributed to developmental factors. Based on their examination of the ways discourse is organized in Chinese compositions and compositions written by ESL Chinese students, Mohan and Lo found no support for claims that the organizational pattern of Chinese differs markedly from that of English. Therefore, language transfer, they argue, seems more likely to help than to interfere. Ability in rhetorical organization, in their view, develops late because learners' attention is concentrated on sentence-level problems. In short, it is emphasized that inadequacies in the Chinese students' compositions cannot be solely explained in terms of the mother tongue interference, but can also be attributed to other developmental factors. Additionally, competence in the organization of written discourse develops late and appropriate instruction does play a major role in this competence.
Moreover, Arndt (1987) conducted an exploratory study to look into the composing activities of six Chinese postgraduate EFL students. The subjects were asked to produce academic written texts in both their L1 and in English language. She collected her data through the use of protocols which are produced by asking learners to compose aloud into a tape-recorder, verbalizing as much as possible about their thoughts as they write. The study found that the composing activities of each individual writer were found to be consistent across languages. The second finding indicated that a limited awareness of the nature of the task was a common source of difficulty in both languages. Arndt concludes saying:

...the teaching of L2 writing must always have a two-fold aim: not only must it help inefficient writers become more efficient in regard to their writing strategies; at the same time, it must help all writers produce more effective L2 texts by enriching knowledge of linguistic resources in the foreign language and fostering awareness of how they can be effectively utilized for the specific demands of language-in-writing including those relating to formality and coherence at the discourse level. (1987, p.265)

In his attempt to find out similarities and differences between L1 and L2 writing, Silva (1993) examined 72 reports of empirical research comparing L1 and L2 writing. The findings of this research reveal a number of differences between L1 and L2 writing regarding both composing processes and features of written texts. For example, it is indicated that L2 writers’ texts are less fluent, less accurate and less effective. Moreover, L2 writers’ texts were stylistically distinct and simpler in structure. Their sentences, for instance, included fewer but longer clauses, more coordination, less subordination, less noun modification, and less passivization. All in all, L2 writing is rhetorically and linguistically different in many ways from L1 writing.
The same claim is also emphasized by Ferris's (1994) study which attempted to look into differences in persuasive writing between native and non-native speakers of English. Ferris analyzed 60 texts written by university composition students. The analysis of the corpus yielded some important results. Generally, the native speakers produced longer compositions than did the non-native speakers. In addition to this, the native speakers were better at handling the use of counterarguments which are considered important components of persuasive structure. The topical structure analysis also showed that the native speakers had a clearer sense of topical focus than their non-native counterparts. It is also pointed out that the non-native speakers relied more heavily on the use of discourse markers to give shape to their ideas, while native speakers employed a greater variety of topic-focus strategies. The inadequacies observed in the writings of these non-native speakers of English can be ascribed to their well-established Li linguistic and rhetorical systems which inevitably influence the way they approach L2 writing.

2.2 EFL Writing

In the 70s and 80s of the 20th century Language Pedagogy witnessed some radical changes. Teaching methods and materials that ascribed to structural linguistics such as the grammar translation method and later the audio-lingual methods were no longer popular. The inadequacies of such structural methods led to the emergence of some function-oriented approaches and methods. Munby (1978, p.1) asserts that "there has been a movement away from grammatical syllabuses, and then situational syllabuses, to what are variously described as notional, functional, or communicative syllabuses ." This paradigm shift obviously led to the emergence of some syllabi, which focused more on the communicative needs of L2 learners and thus gave equal emphasis to the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

As far as writing instruction is concerned, Raimes (1983, p.3) points out that people frequently communicate with each other in writing, but this is not the
only reason for including writing as part of a second/foreign language syllabus. There is an additional reason that has to do with the fact that writing helps learners to learn. First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that are taught to learners. Second, when students write, they get a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned, and to take risks. Third, when students write, they become involved with the new language. The efforts exerted by learners to express their ideas and the constant use of eye, hand and brain are deemed vital for learning reinforcement. Besides, the close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing a crucial part of any language course. Raimes points out that ESL writing teachers have used a variety of approaches to teaching writing in ESL classes.

**Producing a Piece of Writing**

![Diagram of writing components]

- **SYNTAX**
  - sentence structure,
  - sentence boundaries,
  - stylistic choices, etc.

- **GRAMMAR**
  - rules for verbs,
  - agreement, articles,
  - pronouns, etc.

- **MECHANICS**
  - handwriting,
  - spelling,
  - punctuation, etc.

- **ORGANISATION**
  - paragraphs,
  - topic and support,
  - cohesion and unity

- **WORD CHOICE**
  - vocabulary,
  - idiom, tone

- **CONTENT**
  - relevance, clarity,
  - originality,
  - logic, etc.

- **THE WRITER'S PROCESS**
  - getting ideas,
  - getting started,
  - writing drafts
  - revising

- **AUDIENCE**
  - the reader/s

- **PURCHASE**
  - the reason for writing

Source: Raimes (1983)
Different approaches have emphasized different features of the diagram given above, depending on the theoretical assumptions underlying each of these approaches. These approaches as discussed in Raimes (1983) will be briefly touched upon in the following sections.

a) The Controlled-to-Free Approach

In the 50s and early 60s the audio-lingual approach dominated second language learning. The supremacy of speech over writing characterized this phase and, as a result, writing served to reinforce speech in that it stressed the mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms. The controlled-to-free approach in writing is ‘sequential’: students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to imitate or manipulate grammatically. Students are, for instance, asked to change questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular. They might also change words or clauses or combine sentences. They work on a given material and do strictly prescribed operations on it. All in all, this approach to teaching writing emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality.

b) The Free-writing Approach

Unlike the previous approach, the free-writing approach stresses fluency rather than accuracy. Teachers adhering to this approach, in other words, stress quality of writing rather than quantity. They approach the teaching of writing by assigning vast amounts of free writing with only minimal correction of error. This approach encourages learners to consider content and fluency as their top priority and not to worry about form. Students are thus given opportunities to freely communicate their ideas, and issues pertaining to grammatical accuracy and organization are to be taken care of in later stages. Moreover, concern for audience and content is considered vital in this approach.
c) The Paragraph-Pattern Approach

Instead of accuracy of grammar or fluency of content, this approach stresses another feature, that is, organization. Students are involved in activities such as paragraph copying, analysis of model paragraphs, and are also encouraged to imitate model passages. They also do activities such as putting scrambled sentences into paragraph order, identifying general and specific statements. Choosing or inventing a suitable topic sentence is also one of the tasks that learners should do. Besides, sentence deletion or insertion exercises are also provided. It should be pointed out here that this approach, Raimes argues, is based on the principal that people in different cultures organize their communication with each other in different ways. So it is advisable that ESL learners should be familiarized with the way discourse is organized or structured in English.

d) The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach

Teachers following this approach stress the need to work simultaneously on more than one of the features given in the composition diagram above. They view writing as a bundle of skills that need not be learned separately. So composition teachers devise writing tasks that lead students to pay attention to organization, while they work on the necessary grammar and syntax. In short, this approach links the purpose of a piece of writing to the forms that are needed to get the message across.

e) The Communicative Approach

The communicative approach stresses the purpose of a piece of writing and the audience for it. Before they initiate any writing task, students need to ask themselves these two vital questions:

- Why am I writing this?
- Who will read it?
Traditionally the teacher alone has been the audience for student writing. It is generally agreed, however, that writers do their best when writing is actually a communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader. Thus teachers using the communicative approach aim at extending readership to make writing a real communicative act. Student writers are thus provided with “a context in which to select appropriate content, language, and levels of formality” (Raimes, 1983, p.9).

f) The Process Approach

Recently, the teaching of writing has focused less on the written product and focused more on the process of writing. Students ask themselves not only questions about purpose and audience, but also the crucial questions:

a. How do I write this?

b. How do I get started?

In the process approach, students ought to realize that what they first put down on paper is not necessarily their finished product, but just a beginning. They should not expect that the words they put on paper will work straightaway. So the process of writing and rewriting gives learners the chance to discover new ideas, new words and new sentences. In other words, the more you write and rewrite, the better the quality of one’s writing is likely to be. Thus, this new approach to teaching writing necessitated the fact that writing teachers need to devise certain prewriting activities such as ‘discussion’, ‘reading’, ‘debate’, ‘brainstorming’ and ‘list making’ so as to help learners explore a topic before they actually start the act of writing (Raimes, 1983). Moreover, revision is also a characteristic feature of this approach and it is meant to allow students to go back and forth in the text so as to ensure clarity and unity of the entire text.
Based on his discussions with some writing teachers at the University of Southern California, Krashen (1984) came to the conclusion that different writing teachers follow different approaches in their classes. Such variability of approaches, according to him, is based on ‘rumor’, ‘fashion’, or ‘tradition’. He points out:

Approaches ranged from the traditional "theme a week" method, based on a different mode each week, to the Garrison method, involving extensive student-teacher conferences. Some classes kept a journal, others did not. Some used the traditional freshman reader, some read Newsweek, …and some did no reading. Some studied problem-solving technique, some did literary criticism, some did extra vocabulary and grammar exercises. (Krashen, 1984. p.1)

Krashen attributes the current state of affairs to the fact that previous attempts to apply research and theory to the teaching of writing have not been successful. Additionally, the relevant research, he argues, has not been presented to teachers in a meaningful way, that is, in the form of a theory. Therefore, he puts forward a theory that he claims that it is able to address the problems and concerns of writing teachers whether they are involved in teaching L1 or L2 writing. He asserts “only a general theory can tell us what a method is doing, what contributions individual techniques make to the acquisition of writing competence and what aspects of a method are truly important” (p.2).

Krashen's theory makes a distinction between writing competence, the abstract knowledge that the proficient writer has about writing, and writing performance, the ability to use this knowledge in an actual piece of writing. According to him, acquisition of writing competence occurs through large amounts of self-motivated readings for pleasure and/or interest. He claims that
writing competence is acquired subconsciously; readers are unaware that they are acquiring writing competence while they are reading. Similarly, the same remark is articulated by Smith (1983, cited in Krashen, 1984) that the conventions of writing are acquired through reading. Furthermore, Krashen asserts that competence in writing develops the same way competence in second languages develops. It is claimed that since comprehensible input is a prerequisite for second language acquisition, self-motivated reading is considered instrumental for writing competence. He goes on to say that the emergence of speech is the result of a great deal of comprehensible input given to the acquirer, and the grammatical accuracy of speech naturally improves with more input. The same thing, according to him, applies to writing competence that it improves with more self-motivated readings in the target language. When enough reading is done, all the grammatical structures will automatically be presented to the writer. However, it is crucial that the affective filter of the reader’s should be low so as to be able to process the received input. For this to occur, the reader’s focus should be on the message and not on how the message is expressed.

As far as writing performance is concerned, Krashen’s theory posits that writing practice and instruction will not help the writer acquire the code. He claims that “conscious knowledge of rules of grammar and usage helps only at the editing stage and is limited to straightforward, learnable aspects of grammar” (p.27). Though writing competence is necessary, it is not enough to enable writers to write competently. Some writers, Krashen says, are competent because they have acquired the code, but are unable to display their competence due to some inefficient composing processes. Such composing processes can be thus developed through practice and instruction. So practice and instruction are vital components for helping students improve their composing processes.
2.2.2 Reading and Writing Skills

Reading is a complex process. In order to fathom how the meaning of a reading text gets decoded by readers, some process models have been put forward: the bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive processes (Urquhart and Weir, 1998). These models will be very briefly touched upon in the following section to see how encoded meaning gets transferred from the printed page to the reader’s mind.

a) The bottom-up approach

The most popular approach, according to Al-walls (2000), is Gough’s in which the reader starts with the small units, i.e. letters. These letters are recognized by a scanner. Then this information gets forwarded to a decoder, whose job is to convert these letters into systematic phonemes. This string of phonemes is consequently passed on to the librarian, which, with the help of the lexicon, recognizes it as a word. Now the word is ready to be articulated. Then the reader moves on to the next word and continues processing words in the same way to the end of the sentence. Finally, they proceed to a component called Merlin, in which syntactic and semantic rules assign a meaning to the sentence (Gough, 1972).

b) Top-down approach

One might wrongly assume that the term ‘top-down’ implies that readers would employ processes that are opposite to those mentioned just above. Readers, for instance, can start with the sentence and move down to the word and down again to the letter. This is not the case, nonetheless. The top-down approach advocates stipulate that readers’ expectations and hypotheses play a major role in the processing of the text (Urquhart and Weir, 1998).
c) Interactive Approach

In this approach reading is viewed as an interactive process between the reader and the reader’s background knowledge, schemata, and the text. “If readers possess the schemata assumed by the writer, they understand what is stated and effortlessly make the inferences intended. If they do not, they distort meaning as they attempt to accommodate even explicitly propositions to their own preexisting knowledge structures” (Steffensen, 1984, p.61). Besides, if in the bottom-up model the process of reading is thought to be sequential, in the interactive model it is simultaneous. All patterns and elements from different sources interact to decode the meaning of a text. In short, the reader’s linguistic knowledge as well as his or her knowledge of the world simultaneously interact to arrive at the meaning of a text.

It is well understood that there is some interface between reading and writing skills, and successful EFL programs design their teaching materials in a way that ensures mutual reinforcement of these interrelated language skills. Krashen (1984) rightly points out that reading for meaning is crucial for writing competence in L2. Extensive and intensive reading helps L2 writers produce texts that are not only grammatically correct but also stylistically appropriate.

In order to investigate how reading and writing influence one another Carson’s et al. (1990) study examined the first and second language reading and writing abilities of adult ESL learners to determine the relationships across languages (L1 and L2) and across modalities (reading and writing) in the acquisition of L2 literacy skills. Specifically, they examined relationships between (a) literacy skills in a first language and literacy development in a second language, that is, between reading in L1 and L2, and between writing in L1 and L2, and (b) between reading and writing in L1 and L2. The subjects of this study were 105 native speakers of Chinese and Japanese enrolled in an ESL program in the States. These high school graduates were instructed to write an essay and to complete a cloze passage in both their first and second languages. The findings
of this study reveal that literacy skills can transfer across languages. However, the pattern of this transfer is not the same for the two language groups. They also found that reading ability transfers more easily from L1 to L2 than does writing ability, and that the relationship between reading and writing skills varies for the two language groups. They argue that “L2 literacy development is a complex phenomenon for already literate adult second language learners involving variables such as L2 language proficiency, L1 and L2 educational experience…” (p.245).

2.2.3 EA Studies conducted on Arab EFL learners

Arabic-speaking learners of English as a foreign language face phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic problems. English syntax seems to be a major hurdle facing Arab learners of English and this is most probably due to the huge differences between English and Arabic grammars. To look into the nature of the syntactic problems facing these learners, a number of studies have been conducted on Arab learners of English speaking different colloquial varieties of Arabic language. In the following section we will briefly look into these studies so as to have some perspective on the nature of the grammatical difficulties facing these particular learners.

To begin with, Scott and Tucker (1974) conducted a study to examine the proficiency of 22 native speakers of Arabic enrolled in a low intermediate intensive English course at the American University in Beirut. The data was collected by taking written and oral samples at the beginning and end of the term. To elicit the written data, the subjects were shown three pictures and were asked to write three or four sentences describing these pictures. The ultimate goal of this study was to look into the written as well as the oral errors made by the learners. The focus nonetheless was on the syntactic errors produced by these learners. The analysis of the data showed that verbs, prepositions, and articles were the areas where the students most often deviated from Standard English. In addition, relative clauses were also a frequent source
of error. By comparing oral and written errors, Scott and Tucker found that the verbal errors were more than the written ones. They attributed these errors to mother tongue interference, false intra-language analogy and to what they labeled 'performance mistakes'. They asserted that the influence of Arabic was quite visible in the students' frequent omission of auxiliary and the copula, in prepositions and article errors and in their repetitions of subjects and objects.

Further, Hamdallah and Tushyeh (1993) indicate that English prepositions constitute a major learning difficulty for Arab learners of English because they are fewer in Arabic and usage differs. The type of errors made include preposition omission, preposition substitution, and the redundant use of English prepositions.

As indicated earlier English article system constitutes a problem for Arab learners of English and this is thought to be due to the absence of the indefinite articles 'a' and 'an' in Arabic. The definite article 'the' is found in Arabic and this seems to cause such learners to overuse it and to also make errors in using the English indefinite articles. To test these learners' ability in using English articles, Kharma (1981) administered a test to a random sample of 128 students majoring in English at Kuwait University. The test consisted of 40 items containing a slot to be filled by 'a', 'an', 'the' or 'no article'. The results showed that the average score attained on this test is 71.2%, which indicates that article use is problematic for these learners. Kharma claims that a great deal of article use errors made by the subjects is attributed to Arabic interference. Other errors, he argues, are ascribed to wrong learning strategies or to inadequate teaching.

In order to throw light on the difficulties facing Arab learners of English when attempting to form wh-questions, Mukattash (1981) conducted an analysis of 4000 wh-questions produced by 400 first year students at the University of Jordan. The participants were given a test containing ten declarative sentences and were asked to convert them into wh-questions. The analysis of the answers showed that 1592 questions (39.8 %) were erroneous. It is also shown that the
number of errors involving word order and/or auxiliaries is found to be 788; that is to say, 44% of the overall number of errors. This analysis revealed that word order and correct use of English auxiliaries is a real problem for such learners.

Similarly, Al-Mekhlafi’s (1999) study aimed at examining the ability of the level one and level four students at the English department of Sana’a University to correctly form English questions. The analysis of the written as well as the oral data revealed that question formation is problematic for these learners. The errors made by such learners include (1) auxiliary omission, (2) lack of inversion, (3) miscellaneous, (4) auxiliary replacement, (5) inappropriate question word, (6) inappropriate questions, (7) inappropriate use of tense, (8) auxiliary redundant, (9) inversion retained in embedded questions, (10) lack of verbal form concord, (11) lack of auxiliary subject concord, (12) "-ing" omission. Al-Mekhlafi concludes that though the level four learners did better than the level-one learners, question formation is still a problem for such learners. Put it differently, the progress achieved by the level four students is not satisfactory and shows that the English program needs to do more to facilitate the acquisition of such an important structure.

In her important paper *Linguistic Problems Facing Arab learners of English*, Tushyeh (1995) points out that Arab learners of English make phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic errors. The syntactic errors, for instance, involve errors in the use of verbs, relative clauses, articles and prepositions. According to her, the verb-related errors made by such learners involve the following categories:

1- Omission of verb to be
2- Omission of the third person singular present tense markers
3- Misuse of verb forms in English
4- Misuse of verb tenses in English
5- Temporal clauses
6- Phrasal verbs are very confusing to Arab learners of English

Constructing relative clauses is also considered problematic for Arab learners of English (Tadros, 1979; Tushyeh, 1995). They are liable to make the following errors when framing English relative clauses:

1- Insertion of the resumptive or returning pronoun in the following grammatical positions:
   a) Subject position: * The boy who he came
   b) Direct object: * The boy that I saw him
   c) Indirect object: * The boy that I sent a letter to him
   d) Oblique (object of preposition) position: * The key which I opened door with it
   e) Genitive (possessive) position: * The boy who his father is a teacher
   f) Object of Comparative position: * The girl that Salma is taller than her

2- Relative pronoun omission: * A man was sitting in the boat came

3- Relative pronoun morphology: the use of whom for who; the use of who, his for whose.

4- Subject-verb agreement in relative clauses: * The men who is sitting in the boat.

5- Relative pronoun selection: the use of which for human beings, e.g.: * The girl which sings is my friend.

As already indicated in section 2.1.2 above that Arab learners writing in English face not only grammatical and mechanical problems but also problems beyond the sentence level which are motivated by the way discourse is organized in Arabic. For instance, they tend to use coordination in preference to subordination in their sentences. So Arab learners composing in English need to internalize the English grammar to be able to produce grammatically correct sentences, and also need to be thoroughly familiarized with the English rhetoric and the conventions of writing in English.
2.3 Process Models

Zamel’s (1983) study looked into the composing processes of six advanced ESL students, representing a variety of language groups (Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew, and Persian). The study also aimed at investigating the extent to which these students experience writing as a process of creating meaning. To obtain such information, the subjects of the study were asked to perform expository, that is, to write an essay on a given topic. The findings of the study revealed that the skilled writers considered writing as their top priority. That is, they spent more time trying to explore and discover the meaning that they really wanted to convey. In their attempts to attain the meaning that they wanted to express, they went through some processes such as ‘brainstorming’, ‘writing’, ‘rewriting’, ‘revising’, and so on. Language-related concerns are, however, not ignored, but are attended to after their ideas have been ‘delineated’. “This process is creative and generative and may not always be based on a clear sense of direction or explicit plan, but rather a plan that allows for further discovery and exploration” (Zamel, 1983, p.180). The unskilled student writers, on the other hand, seemed to have a different understanding of what composing required. They seemed to view writing, Zamel argues, as “a static transcription of a series of parts-words, sentences, paragraphs, rather than the creation of a whole discourse” (1983, p.181).

In her article The Need to teach Rewriting, Chenoweth (1987) argues that there is a difference in the ways that unskilled and skilled writers compose. Unskilled writers seem to correct surface errors of grammar and punctuation. They, however, pay no attention to the content and organization of what they write assuming that what they have written makes sense and that there is no need to add more explanation or to arrange ideas. They, in other words, fail to consider the problems that readers might have in understanding their text. On the other hand, skilled writers do edit their papers, but they also spend a considerable amount of time working on the overall organization and content of their texts, making sure that the message they want to convey is clearly and
effectively expressed. These skilled writers, in her view, achieve their objectives by employing certain strategies such as ‘adding’, ‘deleting’, or ‘organizing’ larger chunks of discourse. As an advocate of the process approach Chenoweth believes that composition teachers need to get learners involved in the process of writing and rewriting as a means of meaning discovery. So her approach emphasizes meaning discovery and gives priority to fluency as language accuracy is to be achieved in later stages of language learning. As Zamel (1987) charmingly put it “...syntax, vocabulary, and rhetorical forms are important features of writing, but they need to be taught not as ends in and of themselves, but as the means with which to better express one’s meaning” (p.207).

Despite the radical changes that have taken place in the teaching of ESL/EFL composition, Zamel (1987, p.696) points out that writing continues to be taught according to ‘reductionists and mechanistic models.’ She believes that the reason for this is that it is hard to incorporate change in the classroom or perhaps because process studies have not examined writing in the natural setting in which it takes place. In her view, this state of affairs has given researchers the incentive to undertake classroom-based investigations so as to better understand the links between writing behavior and writing pedagogy and to demonstrate that alternatives to the teacher-dominated paradigms are possible. The goal of such classroom-based studies is to throw light on the inadequacies of the traditional approaches and also to suggest a pedagogy that ensures a supportive environment in which learners are acknowledged as writers, encouraged to take risks and engaged in creating meaning.

Scott and Rodgers (1995) have pointed out that new findings in the area of composition theory and methodology have changed our understanding of how writing skills are acquired and produced. According to them, the production of text involves a complex process that occurs in a ‘recursive’ rather than a ‘linear’ manner. Assessment tools rather than the ‘correct every error system’ need to be used in order to teach and evaluate writing as a communicative skill.
2.4 The Present Study

The EFL situation in Yemen, as in many other Arab countries, is generally considered unsuccessful. Producing grammatically correct utterances either orally or in writing is a real difficulty for Arab EFL learners. Put differently, being able to communicate competently verbally and in writing seems to be a far-fetching goal for such learners. Absence of efficient and well-planned English programs in the English departments across Yemen explains the poor performance not only of the English student teachers but also of the in-service teachers who are the graduates of these departments. The departments in question seem to lack well-designed programs including syllabi, teaching materials and up-to-date teaching methods to enable learners to develop their oral and written communication skills in English.

Existing research on Arab learners of English is rather limited and seems to have solely focused on their syntactic problems and seems to have paid very little attention to the other linguistic and communicative difficulties facing those particular learners. For instance, there is a dearth of research that is geared towards bringing change and improvement to the English programs in the English departments in the Arab world. In addition, research tackling verbal and written skills of Arab EFL learners seems to be lacking and this causes the existing language programs not to update the materials and methods from time to time.

To fill this gap, the present study seeks to explore the problems and difficulties facing Arab EFL learners composing in English. The subjects of the study are the trainee teachers of the English department at Taiz University (TU). The study sample includes 80 native speakers of Yemeni Arabic majoring in English at TU. Twenty students, 10 males and 10 females, from each of the four levels of the undergraduate program are randomly selected. The study has three main components: (a) assessment of learners’ linguistic competence, (b) learners’ needs analysis and (c) review and assessment of the teaching
materials and methods currently in use in the department in question. The present study has relevance and significance because it aspires not only to shed light on the writing-related problems facing Arab EFL learners but also to suggest some pedagogical solutions to these problems and difficulties.